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The SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness



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The SMART SET

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The SMART SET

Edited by
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN
and
H. L. MENCKEN

PASTELS IN PROSE

By Winthrop Parkhurst

I

THE Night sought to capture the Day in his arms, for he loved her greatly, and desired to make her his bride. But when he so much as caressed her cheek gently with his cool fingers of twilight she ran away swiftly on the feet of the afternoon. And when he pursued her further she disappeared quickly behind the Western hills and was no more seen. Thus it came to pass that the Night, sorrowful and forlorn, dropped bitter tears upon the earth. And in the morning men found them and called them dew.

II

THE Moon frowned and pulled a heavy cloud angrily across her face. She had suffered a gross indignity. A grey-haired old gentleman, with his eye at a telescope, had momentarily forgotten his calculations and was winking at her indecently.

III

THE Sun god raised his *baton* impressively in the sky. Obediently one hundred million people turned over in their beds and snored in unison. The symphony of the day began.

IV

HER lips were like the parted petals of a new-blown rose. Her breath was like the fragrance of clover blossoms after they are swept by evening rain. Her little hands were tired homing birds that fluttered softly round my head, eternally in search of rest. Her long pink-white finger nails were as unforgiving as a barbed-wire fence planted about a garden of sacred lilies.

V

BECAUSE the artist was poor and had no paints for his picture the woman whom he loved gave him the necessary colours. And the colours which she gave him were seven, and these were the colours: red from her lips, white from her limbs, green from her eyes, ivory from her brow, black from her hair, purple from her heart, and gold from the love which she bore him. And when the artist had painted his picture he beheld it, and it was very beautiful.

Now it came to pass that after many months the artist needed some money. Therefore, with cunning in his brain, he took the picture in which were the ivory of a woman's brow and the purple of a woman's heart and sold it to a certain rich patron of the arts for thirty shining pieces of silver. And when he had done this, he departed with the money which he had gained, and bought himself many rich, strange wines to drink. And when he had become drunk with them all, so that the moon looked like the eyeball of a dead woman and the stars were like little clots of blood upon the sky, he returned to his house, shaking with a fever.

And with the colours that remained on his palette he painted another picture. And the colours of the picture which he painted were seven, and these were the colours: red, the colour of lust; green, the colour of envy; ivory, the colour of greed; black, the colour of hate; white, the colour of death; purple, the colour of pride; gold, the colour of his soul.

VI

Two exquisite, opalescent conch shells were washed up onto the shore of the sea. They were as perfectly modeled as a young girl's ear, and in their pearly depths was carefully treasured the eternal gossip of the ocean.

VII

OUT of the mouth of the cynic there came forth a river of bitterness like unto a swift-flowing stream of wormwood and gall. Therefore his friends questioned him, saying:

"Wherefore dost thy mouth continually drop bitterness as a persimmon tree drops acid fruit to the ground?"

And the cynic answered them, saying:

"Because my mouth is full of bitterness I must ever empty it of bitterness, else the sweet mouth of her whom I love would taste bitter to me also."

And, so saying, he delivered unto them a mocker's sermon on the folly of life, and departed quickly to the couch of his beloved.

VIII

A CERTAIN king, whose ears had long been filled with the venomous gossip of foolish women, bethought himself to make a public example of their folly. Wherefore, in kingly fashion, he ordered that the tongue of each guilty woman should be severed from her head at the edge of a shining sword. When this deed was duly accomplished he proclaimed the celebration of a royal feast which should be composed entirely of women's tongues. And at the appointed hour he sat down before a golden platter and publicly ate them. . . . The women gossiped no more. But the king, it is said, died that same night of a most curiously virulent poison.

THE WINCHESTER WOMAN

By Charles Stokes Wayne

Chapter I

IT was such a brief letter—not much more indeed than the barest note—that Brinton felt himself at a distinct disadvantage in his endeavor to estimate the writer by her handwriting. For the better part of an hour he had been sitting with the little square sheet and accompanying envelope spread out on his desk before him, comparing and reconsidering, one after another, the more or less revealing signs and symbols of taste, temperament and character, as they were there so charily set down.

The room, half library and half study, was a large one, occupying the southwest quarter of the ground floor. But in spite of its size it possessed an atmosphere of snug cosiness, imparted in a measure by the low ceiling, and emphasized in no small degree by the warm mahogany of the colonial furniture, including the ranging bookcases; the low-backed sofa, with its curving ends and quiet green upholstery; the deep easy-chairs of similar covering; the book-crowded tables; and the somewhat severe mantel, its severity softened by the low, long mirror above it, framed in dingy gilt, and reflecting the flower-filled bowl and vases spaced along its shining shelf.

Brinton's desk stood at a right angle to one of the south-facing windows, the morning sunlight slanting diagonally across its nearest corner. And the soft lilac-laden air, entering beneath the lifted sash, gently fanned his cheek as he bent his head in engrossed study of his problem.

His hair, a bit rumpled by his own intruding fingers, was iron grey. His shoulders drooped a trifle. These were, however, the only indications, either in face or figure, of advancing age. In another month he would be forty-three. Yet his skin was as soft and clear as a lad's; his color as ruddy; his steel-grey eyes as bright.

The so-called science of graphology had long been something more than a mere diversion with Brinton. He had come of late years to regard it, if not as infallibly accurate, certainly in the light of his experience, as wonderfully, often indeed as amazingly, expository. By means of it he had been able to read men as open books; reserved, reticent men; dissemblers of good as well as of evil. The endowment of a Cincinnatus, plowing in the field, and the dissimulation of a Cagliostro, no matter how plausible his speech, were clear as a limpid brook to Brinton, once their penmanship—a fairly generous specimen of it—was beneath his practiced eye.

The scanty specimen over which he was now pondering was the sole response to a long-considered and carefully worded advertisement which, after much misgiving and no little demur, he had finally permitted his sister-in-law, who kept house for him, to insert in a New York Sunday newspaper.

What with a recent serious depletion of income—the royalties from his school histories had fallen off disastrously—and an alarming advance in the cost of living, this hitherto easy-circumstanced littérateur had been called upon to face not merely a disturbing accumulation of unpaid bills, but the realization that unless some immediate step were taken to

add to his resources, embarrassment must speedily ensue.

There were three good-sized spare rooms in this quaint old house of his on the edge of his chosen and equally quaint old village in the hills; and it had been his sister-in-law's suggestion that these might be utilized to advantage for the accommodation of summer boarders.

Brinton, as has been said, raised at first a host of objections. He resented with vigor the proposed injection of strangers into the cherished privacy of his little family circle. He fretted for days over the humiliation of such an adjustment, in that it was destined to burden his sister-in-law with so great a share of the involved labor.

In the end he had yielded on one condition. The plan was to be regarded as merely a temporary makeshift, and to be concluded directly it became oppressive either to Alma or himself.

The advertisement was forwarded at once, and three days later, after inspecting each mail delivery with anxious anticipation, this one modest little enquiry had been received.

Alma Fielder was disposed to answer it at once.

"We'll give her the big southwest room," she decided instantly. "The one with the rose-trellis wallpaper and the white enamel furniture. And we'll ask her fifteen dollars a week."

Brinton, however, urged less precipitancy. He pointed out that the writer had said nothing whatever about references. "And we were so very careful to state that references were absolutely essential."

"I'll ask her for references when I write," suggested his deceased wife's sister.

But he was not to be won over.

"Wait," he said. "Twenty-four hours will do no harm. Let me study her fist a bit first."

And now he was studying it. The fruit, thus far, insomuch as the limited material permitted a yield, while in some respects eminently assuring, held, nevertheless, a seed of mystery, over which Brinton bent long in profitless speculation.

The writer, he had learned, first of all, was a tactful person. She was of thoughtful and rather serious mentality. She was reserved, as the compression of her small letters plainly showed. Yet, to judge by the sharply pointed character of these, she was of keenly acute perception. He had read, too, that she was affectionate, of broad mind and fine sense of justice; modest, refined, cultured.

Out of the profundity of his experience he had gathered, as well, certain side indications of personality. She was not in robust health. She was given to periods of nervous depression. She had, in all probability, recently gone through either a severe illness or a trying mental strain.

The cross strokes in the letter were, unfortunately, few; but the few there were, not only diminished in heaviness toward their finish, but were drawn out, seemingly to fill spaces at the end of lines, indicating both transient emotions and mistrust. In his analysis, however, Brinton generously attributed this to the strain and stress of her late ordeal.

"I am desirous of obtaining board for the summer in a quiet, isolated neighborhood, and prefer a small private family to a large boarding house or hotel."

This was one of the three paragraphs of the letter. And in the midst of it lay for the graphologist that one perplexing and apparently baffling mystery. The word "isolated" was not only so strangely different from the rest of the writing as to suggest, at first glance, another hand, but it contained a signification that was distinctly disturbing. In all the other words the *a*'s and *o*'s were fairly open at the top; indicating a degree of frankness. But the *a* and *o* here were, in addition to being closed tightly, each tied, so to speak, with a distinct loop. And, according to the best authorities, this meant secretiveness carried to an extreme.

Viewed charitably, it meant that the

writer would have little hesitancy in resorting to falsehood, if by so doing a desired end was to be gained. Had this looping of such letters been persistent and coupled with certain symbols of lack of conscience, Brinton would have at once pronounced the correspondent an unconscionable liar, and so have decreed her utter undesirability. But the one blot on an otherwise fair record, while it disturbed and puzzled him, was not permitted to weigh heavily in her disfavor. On the contrary, indeed, it provoked in him an itching curiosity to meet and study her.

Uncertain though he was he nevertheless had a theory. And to confirm it he became, just as soon as his conscience would permit, quite as eager as had been his sister-in-law to secure this occupant for the room specified.

He might have gone to Alma at once with his decision. His impulse was to hasten. But he had asked for twenty-four hours, and it was hardly commensurate with his dignity to suggest so much and be satisfied with so little. He put the letter and envelope to one side and took up the proofs of his new edition of "The History of England."

But between the typed impressions and his perfunctory gaze a vision persistently obtruded; a vision of a slight, pale woman in a black frock, with appealing eyes and inscrutable lips. So distinctly he saw it at times that it was like an apparition. He strove in vain to exorcise it. He rose from his desk and paced the floor, but at each turning it confronted him, until at length he could no longer resist its pleading.

The tall clock in a corner of the entrance hall was striking twelve as, directed by the maid, Emily, he mounted the stairs to his sister-in-law's room, to find her seated at her old-fashioned secretary, busy with the household accounts. She was older than Brinton's deceased wife by nearly three years, making her now thirty-six. A fair, plump, middle-sized spinster, domestic by training rather than by taste, with a face too broad for beauty, yet not without charm: the charm of robust health.

At the sound of his step she turned halfway about in her chair, resting one elbow on the blotting-pad, strewn with the bills she had been checking, and smiled. She was fond of David. To her sister he had been the very best of husbands. To herself he had been always most unselfishly kind and considerate. If the day should ever come—and she was not without hope that it might—when he would ask her to fill that sister's place in whole, as she had striven to do in part, she would not deny him.

She saw that the letter was in his hand and his look told her, even before he spoke, that his decision was favorable.

"It's—it's all right?" she queried.

"It's all right. Very right. It didn't take me long, did it? I suppose she's anxious for a prompt reply. Perhaps you had better write her at once, Alma."

"What did you find?"

"There was so little of it that complications were almost impossible. Yet what's there is clear enough. I have no hesitation in saying that Mrs. Wharton is doubtless a very worthy and charming woman. From what I gather it seems to me that we might have been asked to take a much less congenial person into our home."

And he went on to tell her in brief summary of all the better things, omitting his one doubt, and making no reference to his theory nor to his curiosity.

"I do hope she's all you say she is," Alma returned, her own interest piqued as to how they would be borne out. "But you don't often make mistakes, do you, David?"

"Oh, I'm not infallible," he granted. "Sometimes—but I feel pretty sure about this."

CHAPTER II

THE second letter—that in which, to quote the signature "(Mrs.) Anne Wharton" laconically announced the day and hour of her intended setting out for Northborough and the Brinton residence—held little of significance for the

interested graphologist, save a meagre confirmation of those better things in the first which he had conveyed to Alma. To his relief, yet at the same time to his augmented interest, there was no repetition of the closed and tied *a* and *o*.

His sister-in-law's curiosity during the intervening days, deprived of the secret which stimulated his, partook rather of a reflective nature. She wondered still just how nearly David had hit the mark; but she wondered, too, whether their prospective guest was about her own age or older; or, perhaps, young enough to be a better companion for Julia, her sixteen-year-old niece, who was returning from boarding school the following week, than for herself. Nor were her reflections entirely free from a certain undercurrent of misgiving. She had assumed, naturally enough, seeing that there had been no mention of a Mr. Wharton, that the applicant was a widow. Suppose she should be young and lovely!

Alma had never regarded her brother-in-law as especially susceptible, but there was never "any telling" about men, and particularly about widowers. She almost wished that the decision had been adverse. Eventually, however, she consoled herself by arguing that a young and pretty widow, amorously, or even flirtatiously, inclined, would hardly choose to pass the summer in the bosom of a private family in an isolated locality. Women of that sort would naturally prefer a big hotel at one of the popular resorts. Even she, herself, unwolrdly, domestic creature that she was, would have spent her winters in a New York apartment and her summers at a Block Island caravansary, had circumstances not flung her into Northborough and the Brinton household to perform her vicarious service.

To David Brinton, on the other hand, there had been nothing surprising in the fact that the woman he pictured—and she was as young and lovely as Alma could possibly have dreaded—should crave quiet and isolation. Studiously minded himself, finding more joys in books than in people, delighting more in Nature and her varying moods than in the fixed artificiality of cities, he could very well understand the longing of souls like his own for precisely what Northborough and this old, grey, moss-traceried home had to offer.

As events turned out it was David upon whom, at the last moment, devolved the office of going down to the little branch-line station to meet the coming guest. Alma, who for days had been looking forward with ill-suppressed eagerness to the performance of this coveted task, discovered to her dismay that it would be impossible to complete the last of her multifarious preparations before train-time, and was forced reluctantly to yield the privilege to her mildly indifferent brother-in-law.

The unusual, if not important, nature of his mission was mirrored in the spick and span neatness of his toilet. His iron grey hair was more carefully brushed and parted than was customary. Given to wearing soft collars as a rule, or riding-stocks, he wore today a stiff, freshly laundered, standing linen collar and knitted silken scarf with red and black bars. And his straw hat, with its slightly rolled brim, and his pepper-and-salt tweed suit were those he reserved, as a rule, for his infrequent visits to the city. Tall and spare, he presented, in spite of that slight student's stoop, a rather impressively dignified figure as, with hands clasped behind him, he slowly paced the grimy, worn planking of the small station platform. Yet his heart beat with an unwonted rapidity, and his pulses throbbed in nervous anticipation.

With the hoarse echo of the engine's whistle he came to a sudden halt, and stood where it had found him until the ancient locomotive had wheezed slowly to a stop and the few passengers had leisurely alighted.

Not only was he able to pick her out instantly from a choice of three women, all strangers, but at first sight of her, answering to his preconception as she did, his nervousness—his trepidancy—

quite left him, and, lifting his hat, he smiled his recognition.

"I hope your journey hasn't tired you, Mrs. Wharton," he said as he joined her.

"Not in the least," she returned. "Do I look tired to you? It's because I've been ill. I feel more rested at this minute than for weeks. These hills, I know, will do wonders for me."

It impressed him strongly, this fact of his having pictured her so accurately. She was slight, almost to frailty, and so appeared taller than her inches. And she wore mourning, which accentuated a seemingly transparent pallor. Her age, Brinton judged, must be in the neighborhood of twenty-five or -six. He could see that when younger and probably more robust she must have been very beautiful. Her eyes, deeply blue and liquid, were still lovely. But the prevailing reflection of her face now was one of pathos. It appealed strongly for her to Brinton's sympathies. And it was this, in all likelihood, which so set him at once at his ease.

That which a little later kindled in the host a still warmer inclination towards his guest was the quiet enthusiasm with which she greeted, as the dilapidated hired hack climbed the bough-arched village highway, one after another of the quaint landmarks of this Revolutionary hill settlement. The brick church, with its snowy wooden spire; the stone schoolhouse, with its tiny square, small-paned windows and pierced-board shutters; the broad clap-boarded homestead of the Colonial governor, where Washington had been entertained; dear, all of them, to Brinton, not merely because of historical associations, but by reason, as he would often say, "of a certain intrinsic poetry—the poetry of age."

He spoke of this to her now, adding by way of explanation:

"Poetry, you know, Mrs. Wharton, in its widest sense, has been defined by someone, and very cleverly, too, I think, as 'anything that pleasingly addresses the imagination.'"

For the appositeness—the illumination, indeed—of her reply, he was scarcely prepared. He had addressed her almost as he would a child: his own daughter, for instance. And she had responded as his intellectual equal.

"I wonder," she asked, with an odd little plaintive gulp in her utterance, which had, too, a faint suggestion of the South, "whether you remember what Father André said about poetry. He called it 'the sister of sorrow.' 'Every man,' he maintained, 'that suffers and weeps is a poet; every tear is a verse; and every heart is a poem.'"

Their conversation, as the old white horse labored up the long, tortuous hill street of the somnolent village, with its scattered residences, took its tone almost altogether from this key. And Brinton noted, not only that the boarder was true to type as foreseen, in that she was of thoughtful, serious vein, and acutely perceptive; but that she was reserved to reticence. Save for that initial volunteering of a recent illness, she made no reference to herself whatever.

Nor, on her arrival at the house, did Alma find her any more communicative. The impression she made, notwithstanding, was scarcely less favorable than that made upon David. For no single note of the somewhat elaborate and painstaking preparations for her boarder's comfort and pleasure, over which Alma had labored so diligently for the past week, was lost upon the observant and appreciative Anne Wharton. And especially did it rejoice the hostess to witness her demonstrative enjoyment of the freshly cut roses—for it was mid-June—with which her room was gloriously and fragrantly decorated.

And this pleasing primal estimate did not fade with the roses. Each day brought additional evidences of her happy faculty of "fitting in"; of her abounding graciousness; of her never-failing delight in the country and all the homely comforts of the Brinton home. There was, however, just one ingredient of her boarder's disposition which Miss Fielder would have preferred eliminated. And it was the same

one that Brinton had so interestingly noted. Though far from taciturn, Mrs. Wharton spoke rarely, if ever, of her past, and thus far had not once alluded to either acquaintances or friends.

It was not yet the end of the first week of her stay when Alma mentioned her discovery to David. There was something surreptitious in her approach and confidential in her manner, as she stole to him in his study three minutes after Mrs. Wharton had been seen to leave the house and disappear in the direction of the village.

David, catching the faint sound of her step behind him, turned from his desk, a question in his look. But she drew up a chair to intimate adjacence before speaking.

"If it weren't that Julia is returning in a few days," she began quietly, "I'd never say a word. But I've hardly slept the last two nights for thinking of it, and I feel, David, that you should know. There certainly is something queer about that Mrs. Wharton."

Brinton's grey-blue eyes were suddenly serious.

"You—you mean you've discovered—?"

"Yes and no. Now let me tell you. I—I just love her. She's as sweet and appreciative and considerate as any woman could possibly be. And it's perfectly remarkable how well you read her from her handwriting. But all the same I'm sure that she isn't the sort for Julia to live under the same roof with. Because there's a mystery about her."

"A mystery!" Brinton echoed, his interest quickened.

"A mystery," Miss Fielder rejoined. "Since entering our door she's never once mentioned anyone that she knows. Now, has she? You know how small the world is, and it just stands to reason that she's afraid we might know someone she knows and so learn something about her that she doesn't want known."

There at once recurred to Brinton a vivid vision of that "isolated" of the first letter, with its too secretive *o* and *a*. In the fulness of his admiration for Mrs. Wharton he had almost forgotten it. But if he still favored the theory of a mystery, his reply to his sister-in-law dissembled it.

"It seems to me, Alma," he said, half smiling, "that you're taking a rather harsh view of the matter, aren't you? There are many persons, you know, who dislike to have others—practical strangers, especially, as we are in this case—learn of their affairs, no matter how innocent they may be."

But the explanation was not adequate to satisfy Alma. It might apply in a measure. It might account for her peculiar reticence. There was something else, however.

"She's been here nearly a week," she went on, "and not a single letter has come for her—not in our care, I mean."

"Is that any reason to call her queer?"

"It wouldn't be, if it wasn't that she gets mail just the same."

"Gets mail just the same?" David repeated questioningly.

"Didn't you see her go out just now? There isn't a morning that she's missed going to the post-office. Day before yesterday Jane Homer saw her ask at the delivery window and saw Mr. Higgins hand her out three letters. It's pretty plain to me that she's got something to hide, or she wouldn't be so careful about our not getting sight of so much as the postmarks on her correspondence."

"I'm sorry I can't agree with you, Alma," Brinton returned. "I'm pretty sure Mrs. Wharton has a good and perfectly innocent reason for preferring to get her mail in that way. She tells me that her physician wishes her to walk each day, and that she dislikes walking except with an object. That would explain the matter, wouldn't it?"

Alma evidenced annoyance. Her brow knitted and she fidgeted nervously in her chair.

"It might, and it might not," she answered. "We never did get any references from her, you know. And I think that was a great mistake. Couldn't you

get around it somehow to ask her for at least one?"

Brinton smiled a little quizzically. "I suppose I could," he said. "But I don't think I shall."

"Not even for Julia's sake?"

"No. Not even for Julia's sake. I don't think it necessary."

Chapter III

Against the quiet pearl background of the Brinton home Julia blazed bright as Arcturus in the cold north sky. To Anne Wharton she was a complete and pleasing surprise. From the photograph, proudly shown to her by her host—a photograph taken of his daughter four years previously, a child of twelve—she had been led to expect a rather negative, mouselike little thing; neither pretty nor homely; without temperament, and almost without personality. And she had come down to supper on the evening of Julia's homecoming to discover a young woman of striking, if a little bizarre, beauty, and distinctly attractive individuality. A young woman with a glory of hair the color of burnished copper, a skin of rose-leaf texture and fair as unmarred lilies, lips of vividly contrasting scarlet, and eyes as green as the salt sea.

She was quite as tall as Anne, and firmly moulded, with sweeping, curving lines which defied the pale blue muslin frock she wore to mask them.

There had been no introduction. Julia hadn't waited for it. Almost before their guest was across the threshold and in the room, she had cried out:

"Oh, there you are! I've been dying to see you. I wanted to go to your room, but Aunt Alma wouldn't hear of it. Daddy's written me such lovely things about you, Mrs. Wharton."

And impulsively then there had followed an embrace, and the girl's lips were pressed warmly against the boarder's cool cheek.

It was not until supper was over, though, and Julia had linked arms with her and taken her to see the view from "Lookout," that Anne Wharton came to a real appreciation of the open frankness of David Brinton's daughter, and gained thereby that clear insight to her strange admixture of ingenuous innocence with romantic fervor which was so strongly to attract her.

From the crest of Lookout Hill, twenty miles away to the eastward across the valley, against the dark green slope of Eagle Mountain, was visible an irregular patch of paler color. It was so small and so uncertainly outlined that one might have gazed at the view for hours and not detected it.

"Ten to one you never noticed it before, did you?" asked the girl after she had pointed it out. "And—how many times have you been up here since you came?"

"Not often," Anne answered. "Not over three, as I remember."

"You can't see it in the morning, ever. And never when it's cloudy. But on clear days this is the best time, with the sun full upon it. Look! Look now! Don't you see something glisten? It's like a spark."

Anne, shielding her eyes with a hand across her brow, gazed afresh. "Yes," she said suddenly. "Oh, yes! What is it?"

"It's the lake. Or one end of it, rather."

"And there's a hotel there?" Anne asked.

"You'd hardly call it a hotel. It's just a big house on a rise above the lake, where they take men who come up to fish. The lake is famous for its golden trout, you know."

"It has a name, I suppose."

"Of course. Parmalee's."

Anne wished that she might have been more enthusiastic about it, since Julia had been so eager to bring her here and to point it out. But it seemed to her such a trivial thing to make so much of. There was no question as to the impressiveness of the view in general. She had been told of that within an hour or so after her arrival, and had climbed here the very next morning to feast upon it. She had told Julia that. But the girl had enthusiastically prom-

ised her a surprise worth while. And the surprise was only this—Parmalee's.

Now, Julia was begging her to sit down with her on one of the great boulders and watch the clearing darken and merge, until quite indistinguishable, into the deeper hue of the mountain-side.

"As the sun sinks behind us you'll see the shadow creep higher and higher up Eagle. It's worth while, Mrs. Wharton. Really it is. It makes you feel—oh, I don't know how to tell you! Not sad, exactly, but—but so at peace. Just the same sort of peace one gets from reading Gray's 'Elegy.'"

What a strange combination the girl was! Or, could it be that intuitively she had read the boarder's secret unrest? That it was for this assuaging influence she had brought her up here, and not for the mere pointing out of the revealed clearing? The thought troubled her. Understanding was what she wished most to avoid.

"Surely, at your age, dear," she replied, "you shouldn't crave the melancholy."

"I shouldn't call it that. Though I suppose the Elegy is that, too. I mean tranquillity, rather. Mental calm, you know. A kind of sweet serenity. It's very grateful sometimes. Don't you think so? Oh, do, please, sit down there. And while we watch I'll tell you something, if you care to hear."

Anne did as she was bidden, and her young friend of an hour shared the smooth stone with her, sitting quite close, and circling her waist with an arm.

"May I tell you? It's about something that happened today, coming up on the train."

"Of course you may, dear."

"And you'll understand. I know you will. I couldn't tell Daddy, or Aunt Alma. They wouldn't."

"Are you sure? I'm certain your father would. Somehow I feel that I could tell him anything, and be sure that of all persons he would be just the one who would understand."

"But you're not his daughter," Julia qualified. "That makes all the difference. I don't mean that he'd punish me or be really angry. But I'm afraid he wouldn't— Oh, I know he wouldn't approve. And it might, you know, hurt him so just because he couldn't."

"And you think that I will?"

"I don't think you'll disapprove. Because you're broader. You know the world better. You've—" But there she paused.

"I've what, dear?"

"It isn't so long since you were a girl of sixteen yourself."

Anne smiled. "You don't think so? To me it seems centuries. However, my dear, whether I approve or disapprove won't make so very much difference, will it? That's the answer. But your father's or your aunt's disapproval would make you unhappy."

Julia protested that she'd care very much how Mrs. Wharton viewed the matter, admitting, after some further debate, that she was not herself quite sure that she was in the right.

"But he was so good-looking, and so kind, that I couldn't be rude to him," she defended.

There was not very much of novelty in the experience. Julia, it seemed, had had a seat in the day coach to herself until just before the train pulled out. Then a young man, coming through, had halted in the aisle beside her, and politely lifting his hat, had enquired if he might share it. Naturally, she had consented. She couldn't possibly do otherwise. The morning being warm and her window closed, he had next volunteered to raise it for her. A little later he had offered her one of several magazines with which he was provided, and she saw no reason to refuse it. As she was glancing through it he ventured to recommend one of the stories. He happened to know, he said, the young woman who wrote it. It was an odd coincidence, he added, but she—Julia—bore a striking resemblance to the author. Certainly enough for them to have been sisters; nearly enough for them to be twins. Julia's hair, though, was a more beautiful shade, and he could tell by her eyes that she was bet-

ter tempered. The writer was rather a vixen, he said.

"And because you didn't wish him to change his opinion, you from that moment strove to show him how agreeable you could be," Anne divined. "It was very clever of him."

"I didn't want him to think me a vixen, too," Julia naïvely admitted.

"Of course you didn't. Which was why, when he invited you to lunch with him in the dining-car, you first pretended not to be hungry and then yielded after a little persuasion."

The girl gazed at her with eyes of astonishment.

"How could you possibly know that?" she asked.

"I know the type and its methods," was the answer. "Shall I tell you some more?"

"Can you?"

"I fancy so. Since you had no appetite your new friend suggested a cocktail. Just an innocent little Bronx, with nothing in it that could possibly hurt you. Didn't he?"

This time Julia's scarlet lips parted in speechless wonder. Was it possible that her adventure was not unique after all, but merely one of many so nearly identical that each little incident of it could be so accurately described by an absent third party?

"Of course he did," Anne Wharton went on, not a little amused. "And, equally of course, you declined. The word cocktail frightened you. But he ordered it just the same, and made you take just a little sip of it to prove it was as harmless as he had promised. And before the luncheon was over you'd drunk half of it. Or was it all?"

"Oh, not a third," Julia protested hurriedly.

"But the third was enough to loose your tongue, wasn't it? And in a little while you felt as if you had known this nice young gentleman, not for hours, but for years. And he grew handsomer with each passing moment, and you fondly imagined that you'd never forget him or this day. This wonderful day, when Romance had come into your life for the first time. Now, tell me, my dear, the rest of it."

"But you've told it all," Julia declared, a little regretfully.

"Oh, no, I haven't. There's more, I'm sure. Did he come to Northborough with you? Are you to see him again soon? Or did he give you an address to write to?"

"He went on," was the answer. "I changed at the Junction, you know."

"He has your address, I suppose. And he'll be coming back this way very soon."

Julia nodded.

"And his address? Did he give you that?"

There was another nod.

"And asked you to write?"

This time it was a weakly reluctant nod. The arm that had been so close about Anne's waist had relaxed by degrees. Now it slipped down until the hand rested on the boulder. The girl's gaze was fixed on the toes of her low, white canvas shoes.

Suddenly Anne was conscious of a chill in the air. The sun had gone down at their backs. A mist was spreading over the valley below them. The slope of Eagle Mountain was black with shadow, its crest sharply silhouetted against the pallid eastern sky. The clearing had vanished, unobserved by either.

But now, as her gaze swept the mountain-side and tentatively approximated the lost location, she had the answer to the question that had bothered her. It was evident why she had been brought here. Manifestly evident. Her earlier surmises were wrong. It was not for the view; it was not for the assuaging of her unrest. It was not even for opportunity to relate to her an experience that clamored for relation. A score of places would have answered that purpose.

A wave of appreciative sympathy swept Anne's being. The child flowering into womanhood was in love; and out of the calloused depths of her own

world-wisdom she had brought forth a rod to hurt her. Contrite, she turned and gathered her into her arms.

"Oh, my dear," she murmured, "how cruel I have been to you! I have trodden on your rose and bruised it, because I thought I saw a worm in its heart."

Julia, sobbing, pressed her face against the boarder's shoulder.

"What—what can I do to give it back to you? If I—I happened to be wrong—" Anne continued yearningly. "And it might be, you know. I do hope I have been."

"You are. I know you are," came in muffled tones from her shoulder.

There was silence for a little, and then Anne said:

"Let me write to him for you. That may help. I'll say I am a friend of yours—an older friend—and that you have told me of how kind he was to you. That I am stopping at your home and—let us see! Suppose I say that, as you couldn't tell your family, truthfully, of how you met, he might ostensibly call on me, and I'd see you properly introduced."

Julia lifted her eyes that were shining through tears.

"You darling!" she cried, delighted. "I can never repay you."

Anne kissed her, saying: "I think I know where he's stopping. He's at—Parmalee's. Isn't he?"

"How—how did you know that?" The green eyes were wide with wonder.

"It was self-evident, my dear. Otherwise we shouldn't be where we are at this moment."

"But you don't know his name. You couldn't know that, could you?"

"No. I couldn't know that. You'll have to tell me."

"I think it's a pretty name, myself. It's—Alan Woodward."

As if startled by a sound behind her Mrs. Wharton turned abruptly, and her averted face was hidden. *Alan Woodward!* Was there another man of that name? Or was it the same?

Chapter IV

Ten days had passed since the return of Julia, and the Brinton homestead was not like the same place. Constraint hung over it, oppressive as foul air. At meals there were sudden hushes and silences that were deadly, followed usually by precipitate bursts of speech, inept observations, palpably forced by desperate effort to appear natural and so disguise the prevailing absorption of each in something not to be shared.

Alma Fielder, sitting opposite her brother-in-law, was most obviously affected. Her color came and went in many and sudden successions. She stammered, lost herself in the middle of a statement, totally forgot what had been said but a moment before, and who said it. And her niece, seated on her right, was scarcely less deeply engrossed and fitfully embarrassed. Mrs. Wharton strove, and partially succeeded in it, to make it appear that she was affected merely by the attitude of these others. And Brinton, puzzled, but least changed of any, accepted the boarder's effort at its face value. Vainly he tried to restore to the normal the atmosphere of the tri-daily communion. In the privacy of his study, between meals, he questioned both Alma and Julia. Not once, but several times; yet with no definite success.

Alma had proved sullen. It was true, she admitted, that she had much on her mind. But it was not a matter she could speak of.

"You are still harboring your antagonism to Mrs. Wharton," he suggested. "Is that it?"

No, it was not it. It was something altogether different, she contended. There was no use to ask her about it, because she couldn't tell him.

Julia, on the other hand, denied that there was anything.

"I just get this way, sometimes, Daddy," she insisted. "Unless I'm laughing all day you imagine I'm unhappy or have something on my mind. But I'm not a baby any more. I have

moods, I suppose, like all other people, except dear you."

He called her attention to what he called a "change in her attitude" towards Mrs. Wharton.

"At first," he said, "you seemed so fond of her. The evening of the day you came home you took her up Lookout to see the shadows climb Eagle. For two or three days you and she were always together. Now you scarcely speak to her. I haven't seen you go out with her for nearly a week. Has your Aunt Alma said anything to you about her? Have you had any misunderstanding? Any words?"

Julia's fair head signalled a negative. "I haven't heard a thing," she answered. "And I think she's lovely. Only—I thought, maybe, I was tiring her; never leaving her alone."

Brinton did not contradict her. Perhaps she was right. She, really, was only a child, and the boarder was a woman of the world. They could have very little in common.

He did not want Mrs. Wharton to feel, though, that there was any attitude of unfriendliness beneath his roof. His own spirit of cordiality, so in evidence on the day of her coming, never slackened. Spurred now by the seeming dereliction of the others, it quickened. He became more and more attentive. He sought opportunities to interest and entertain her. He put the books of his library at her disposal. He introduced her to his work; explaining his methods, and dilating on his aims. For some years, in addition to his somewhat perfunctory creation of school histories, he had been engaged on a more ambitious creation. A volume for adult reading, dealing with American legends. For hours she listened spellbound to his recitals from the material he had collected for this purpose, charming him in turn, not merely by her appreciation, but by her intelligent and suggestive comment.

The picture that she made, sitting there against the pillows, in one corner of the low-backed sofa, of the library-study, on cool evenings, when a log fire was grateful; or in a deep, highbacked splint rocker, on the vine-trellised piazza, when the night was more temperate, was one which became lovelier and lovelier for him with each passing occasion. Already she had lost all sign of invalidism. She was no longer pallid, no longer obviously fragile. There had been a filling-out, a rounding, of both face and figure. There was more color in her lips, less shadow about her eyes, so liquidly blue, and her dark brown hair, so smoothly brushed from its white side-parting, had taken on an added lustre. She wore white now, more often than black, the blouses turned back from a sharp V at the throat, the joining accentuated by an old-fashioned oval cameo brooch, which enhanced the fairness of her skin exposed above it.

More than once this picture of her had recurred to Brinton in his dreams, and there was hardly an hour of the day that he did not recall it. One morning, following an unusually long and pleasurable evening with her, he found himself, in a leisurely walk through the village, so lost in such retrospect as to be on the point of passing without recognition so old and close a friend as Simon Scudder.

It had required, indeed, a hand on his arm, accompanied by a spoken salutation, to arrest him; to drag him back, as it were, from the maze of abstraction into which he had so unconsciously strayed.

The meeting, as it eventuated, was, oddly enough, to resolve, and not very happily, the one problem that still lingered deterringly in his mind concerning the entire worthiness of Anne Wharton. For his friend Scudder, a fidgety and somewhat querulous little quidnunc, with whom few got on well, and who could never have lasted with Brinton as he had, had it not been for that man's divine charity, had noted Mrs. Wharton's appearance at the post-office, within a few days after her arrival in Northborough, and had ever since been restless with curiosity.

Handshaking over, and Brinton's

apology for his preoccupation concluded, Scudder, without preamble, fell avidly upon his subject.

"I learned only last night, Dave," he began in his quick, nervous, piping staccato, tipping his antique Dunstable straw hat backward from his furrowed brow, and applying his silk handkerchief to the gathered perspiration, the morning being warm, "learned it over at Jamison's—that the slim, pale lady that used to dress in black, and now wears white most of the time, is staying up at your house."

Brinton, taken aback at this sudden restoration of a topic so recently in his thoughts, nodded confirmation; and the dapper little villager continued:

"Some kin of yours, eh?"

"No, not of mine," was David's equivocal answer.

"Oh, I see. Relative of Alma's I suppose."

"A friend, Simon. Just a friend."

The little man spread his narrow shoulders and inserted his thumbs in the armholes of his crash waistcoat. Then, with head canted and his small, faded eyes narrowed to mere steely slivers, he pressed:

"Known her about how long?"

Brinton proved himself the hundredth man. He laughed. More than that, he laid a lightly indulgent hand on his inquisitor's shoulder and let it rest there for a second or two with amiable affection.

"There, there, Simon," he said kindly; "she's a widow, to be sure, old friend; but she's much too young a widow for an old bones like you."

Mr. Scudder's face took on a momentary flush, kindled by mingled resentment and a sense of frustration. But it was only momentary. Then he smiled a little embarrassedly, and protested:

"God bless my soul, David, I hope you don't think I want to marry every woman I ask a question about."

"Heaven forbid," said David, slyly.

"It was only because of a resemblance," continued Simon. "And a very marked resemblance at that."

For a fraction of a second Brinton's eyes dropped. He was wondering whether he dared to seem interested.

"A resemblance?" he repeated at length.

"It hardly seems possible that two women could look so much alike," the little gossip went on. "But of course if this lady is a friend of yours and Alma's that puts it outside the range of reason that she could be also the woman whose picture was in the paper."

"Yes, I doubt that her picture was ever in any paper."

"Her name isn't Winchester, I suppose?" ventured Mr. Scudder.

"No. It isn't Winchester," Brinton confirmed.

"And she don't come from Nashville, Tennessee?"

"She comes from New York," her champion asserted.

But the combination of names had caused a half-awakening, an indeterminate stirring, of vague, latent memories. He struggled mentally for lucidity; for a connecting link that would make definite the nebulous suggestions—suggestions which, tenuous and misty as they were, held a hue of the unpleasant; of rather, indeed, the deplorable.

He became conscious now, as he stood groping, that they had been standing this little while just without the gate of Simon Scudder's antiquated, but neat, little cottage home. The arching chestnuts overspread them with an agreeably cool shade; but the narrow stone walk which led in to the veranda steps was blazing hot in the morning sunshine.

"If you've got a minute to spare, Dave," he heard his companion suggesting, "I'd just like you to look at that picture of the Winchester woman. Pictures, I suppose, I'd best say, for I've got about a dozen of 'em all told; though there's only one that looks such an awful lot like your visitor."

"The Winchester woman!" The phrase shot an illuminate gleam into the dim and dour corner of Brinton's memory in which that grim thing had been so elusively moving amid shadows. He remembered the story as for days—

weeks even—it had occupied columns on the front page of his newspaper. It had been called "another Maybrick case!" in comparison with an English *cause célèbre* of the close of the last century. He had, however, failed to follow it with any great care. It had struck him as sordid—repulsive, even; and he had never learned its conclusion.

For the wife, accused of craftily accomplishing the poisoning of her husband, he had had, as for all matters of a criminal nature, scant interest. But now, suddenly lifted, as it were, by possibility, remote or imminent, into the very fore-front of the immediate, the subject took on for him a tremendously vital, and overwhelmingly serious, importance. And yet he was sensible, in the midst of his intense emotional disturbance, that to Simon Scudder, of all persons, he must give no sign.

How well he succeeded in dissembling the eagerness of his curiosity was a question which later caused him some measure of uneasiness. His next definite recollection was of being seated in Simon's square sitting-room, with its faded brown wall-paper, its musty and worn ingrain carpet, and its straight-backed, rush-bottomed chairs. On the ledge of the old-fashioned mahogany secretary beside him lay a score or more of newspaper clippings, each a chapter in the questionable story of the woman whose likeness he was holding with perfidiously trembling fingers before his unwilling, spectacle-aided eyes.

"You see, Dave," his garrulous old friend was chattering, "the way I come to take such an unusual interest in this case was because of my nephew, Lem Scudder. He's been practising law down in Nashville, and he was this woman's counsel. It was Lem that got her off scot-free, when there was a whole lot of damaging evidence against her. I don't just know myself how he did it. There's nothing in all these reports of the trial to show absolutely that she wasn't guilty. So I guess it must 'a' been Lem's eloquence with the jury. He always was a mighty impressive speaker."

Brinton lowered the paper he was holding and looked over the rims of his glasses at his flushed and feverish-appearing companion.

"So you think," he said, striving to exclude from his tone all but a passing interest, "that in spite of Mrs. Winchester's acquittal she may still have been guilty?"

"Well, it most assuredly does look that way to me," Mr. Scudder rather proudly admitted. "Lem is certainly a great advocate."

Having with an assumption of merely casual concern glanced over some other of the clippings, the visitor returned them to the ledge of the secretary and rose. Then, with an unveracious smile which he endeavored to make appear natural, he said:

"There is some facial resemblance, to be sure. But a very slight one, as you'd see yourself, Simon, had you seen more of Mrs. Wharton. But that is the only similarity. Why, she is one of the sweetest, mildest, most inoffensive little women that I ever knew."

"Of course, of course," Mr. Scudder agreed. "I never thought for a minute it could be her after you telling me the lady was a friend of yours. But at first I kind of surmised as maybe you and Alma had decided to take a boarder. There's several in the village that are doing it. And that she just applied and you took her without knowing anything in particular about her."

"We—we know—*all* about her," Brinton stammered.

Chapter V

Anne Wharton had written to Mr. Alan Woodward on the morning following her talk with Julia. If it should by any chance be the Alan Woodward that she knew there was all the more reason for her to write, reluctant though she was to renew an acquaintance that she hoped had been ended forever. In her letter she had requested him to call at the Brinton residence and ask for her; explaining that Julia had made her her confidante. But Mr.

Woodward had not called, nor had he replied to her letter. And with each passing day she became more and more convinced that he intended to do neither. Her suspicions were thus confirmed. It was precisely what she might have expected. And she was glad for the girl's sake that she had thus been able to discourage the prolongation of a flirtation untouched by honorable intent.

Such frustration, however, was evidently the very last thing that the girl had wished for or looked forward to. Mrs. Wharton observed her change of attitude with regret, while congratulating herself on having saved her perhaps from a more lasting unhappiness. She was glad, too, that she had taken the precaution of showing Julia the letter before sealing it, and of giving it to her to post. There could, therefore, be no question as to whether she had deceived her by not writing, or have included anything to discourage the man's coming.

Anne was thinking of the matter as she moved about her bedchamber, dusting and tidying, on the morning that David was to have his chance meeting with Simon Scudder and the pregnant interview which followed. From her window she had just seen Mr. Brinton pass down the stone-flagged walk to the gate, and disappear in the direction of the village, when her attention was caught by a small, shabby, mud-stained gasoline vehicle stopping before the house, and a man alighting from it.

He was a young man in a Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers of brown tweed, and a cap of the same material, and russet shoes. A tall young man of quick, nervous movement. The visor of his cap half hid his face, but she recognized him instantly, nevertheless.

It was Alan Woodward. *Her* Alan Woodward.

Before she quite realized what she was doing—acting wholly on a swiftly sudden impulse, she was halfway downstairs; her one aim to reach the door and open it and face him before he could ring the bell.

He had one foot on the veranda as she stood on the door sill confronting him, a challenge in her round dark eyes. At sight of her he paused, taken aback. Then, abruptly, he snatched off his cap, revealing a rumpled head of dark, sandy hair. He was about to speak, but she checked him, laying a forefinger across her lips.

Then, softly closing the screen door behind her, she moved off to the right, gesturing to him to follow, and thus led him around the corner of the veranda to where the screening vine-covered trellis was—a spot on which no window looked forth, a nook hidden from the road. There were chairs there, and a table, and a hammock.

"Please sit down," she said.

But he hesitated. Ordinarily self-contained, he was now half-dazed with astonishment.

"God!" he said under his breath. "This *is* a surprise! You here, of all women!"

She frowned, pointing to a chair.

He gripped the back of it in his nervously impulsive way, dragging it to a new position, and its feet scraped the floor with a shrill, rasping sound which tortured her. She had been so striving for quiet. Controlling herself, she sat down softly where she could face him, in the hope of influencing him to caution by her example.

Throwing his cap on the table at his left, he dropped heavily to the chair-seat and began fumbling in the pocket of his jacket, from which he produced a cigarette-case.

"Please! Please don't!" she begged in a whisper.

His first expression was one of surprise. He was about to ask: "Why not?" Then, with a shrug of annoyance, he dropped the case back again.

"I—I am Mrs. Wharton," she told him.

For the briefest moment he seemed not to take it in. Then he laughed, a derisive chuckle.

"That's funny," he declared. "I thought I'd seen Mrs. Wharton's hand-

writing before. But I never for a moment—God! That *is* funny!"

"I wasn't sure it was you, you know. There must be other Alan Woodwards in the world." ?

"But you took a chance, eh?"

"Yes, I took a chance."

"If you'd known—if you'd been sure—you wouldn't have written, I suppose."

"Probably not. I should have tried to persuade her never to see you. To forget you."

"You'd have told her you knew me?"

"Unquestionably. That and—more."

His lip curled in sinister defiance.

"Now," he said, "it will be up to me to tell her something. Haven't you thought of that? Wouldn't it have been better for you to keep under cover?"

"For my own sake, yes, it probably would. But I can't spare myself at such sacrifice to her. That is what I made you sit down here to tell you." She was very calm, very determined.

"You think she'll believe you, rather than me?"

"I think her father will."

"Oh, I see!" he retorted with an amused smile. "You mean to make a clean breast of everything to the old man. He'll put a lot of faith in what you tell him, knowing at the start-off that you've been living in the bosom of his family under a name that isn't your own, and that you are really so—will you pardon me if I say—notorious?"

"I'll have to risk that. And I'm quite willing to."

Woodward's hand again sought and produced the cigarette-case.

"You'll have to risk something else, too" he went on, composedly. "I'm off duty just now. Fishing and resting up. But I can't consistently let a news-spread like this get by me. The whole country's been wondering what became of you. A picturesquely intimate interview will be the biggest kind of a scoop. And, believe me, my dear, I'm just the boy to write it."

"I expected that," she told him. "But, after all, it's not such a great price to pay for an innocent girl's honor and happiness." A cigarette was now between his lips and he was about to strike a match. "Do you mind waiting just a minute before smoking?" she asked.

For answer the match blazed and a deep inhalation followed.

"Why can't you keep your hands off?" he said suddenly. "I don't mean any harm to the kid. I'm in love with her. Honestly in love with her. She's different, you know. I—I'll marry her."

"And your present wife?"

"I haven't any. Divorced her—three months ago."

"That isn't true," Anne rejoined. "I know it isn't true."

"You know better than I do, eh? All the same you're wrong and I'm right. And I can prove it. Keep your hands off and I'll let the scoop slide. I'll pretend I never saw you in my life before. That's fair, isn't it?"

But she did not answer. She was listening. The sound of the screen-door opening had carried to her. Now there were footsteps on the veranda. Light footsteps, coming nearer. A cloud of cigarette smoke was floating around the corner of the house, borne by the soft summer air which was being wafted in that direction.

Anne's gaze turned, waiting; and Alan Woodward rose abruptly, his eyes following hers. The next instant Julia Brinton came into view, and stood, her cheeks blazing with sudden crimson.

"Why—why, Mr. Woodward!" she cried in startled but glad surprise. "I was just going to—" And then she remembered Mrs. Wharton's presence and was mute.

To Anne, though, the five words, coupled with the fact that Julia was enticingly frocked in sheer cambric and wearing her most becoming hat of Leghorn straw, wreathed in cornflowers of brilliant blue, were gravid with significance.

"Mr. Woodward and I, dear, are old acquaintances," she said to shorten the pause. "We happened to meet at the door, and I've been detaining him."

She stood up now as the caller had

done at sight of the girl, and was continuing:

"He hasn't told me yet why he diddn't answer my letter, or call on me, as I asked him to."

And turning to him, she asked with affected cordiality:

"Why was it?"

"I've been away," he answered with quick adaptability. "Only received it this morning, and came at once. So, now that we're all here together, maybe you'll present me to Miss Brinton."

And he smiled broadly at what he considered a very clever turning of the tables.

"Everything considered," Mrs. Wharton returned, "that now seems hardly necessary. Are you going for a drive, dear?"

Julia's color, which had receded, again mounted. Her embarrassment appeared painful. Anne did not wait for the delayed response.

"Because," she went on, "I think, if you are, you had better see your Aunt Alma first. She may want you to do an errand for her."

But Julia failed to stir. Her discomfort, apparently, waxed more burdensome.

"If you'd rather I'd ask her, I will," the boarder pursued. "I won't be a minute."

And she brushed by the discomfited guilty ones, disappearing an instant later within the house.

No sooner was she gone than the mute Julia found voice. Hidden by the screening trellis, she caught eagerly at Woodward's hand, lifting to him solicitous green eyes.

"Oh, Alan!" she murmured distressfully. "Why *did* you come here? I told you never to come. I knew this might happen. My clock stopped and—"

"I waited nearly half an hour for you," he interrupted. "And when you didn't show up, darling, I was sure you were ill or something and nothing could have kept me away another minute. I had to come. That's how I love you."

"But I won't be able to go with you now. I know I won't. She'll tell Aunt Alma, and—"

"Of course she'll stop it," Woodward lamented. "What won't a jealous woman do? And that's what's the matter with your boarder. She's so jealous of you she'll hesitate at nothing to keep you from me. I'll tell you. I'd better be off now, and I'll send you word tomorrow what is best to do. Or, no, wait! Letters aren't safe. I'll meet you tomorrow at two, same place, and arrange everything. That's best. And meanwhile if you love me, you'll make up your mind to come away with me."

Hurriedly, having embraced and kissed her, he stepped beyond the screening trellis, and vaulting the veranda railing, crossed the lawn, passed through the gate and sprang into his shabby, mud-coated car, which vanished down the road.

A moment later Alma Fielder, in evident agitation, appeared on the veranda, calling:

"Julia! Julia! Where are you, child?"

The girl turned the corner of the house with dragging, reluctant footsteps.

"What's this that Mrs. Wharton tells me?" her aunt demanded. "You're not going automobile riding with any strange young man. I'm surprised you should think of such a thing."

Julia made no reply.

"You must excuse yourself," her aunt went on. "Do you hear me?"

Julia nodded.

"Don't get excited, Aunt Alma," she ventured at length. "I'm not going. But he wasn't a strange young man. He's a friend of Mrs. Wharton's. And he's a perfect gentleman."

"All the same your father doesn't know him, and I don't. He's never called here till this morning. Why, I don't know what you could be thinking of. Where is he?"

"Gone," was Julia's laconic answer.

Miss Fielder sighed in relief. "Well, it's a good thing he has. At the same time I don't see why Mrs. Wharton should have such callers. He can't be

much or she wouldn't ask me to stop your going with him. I wish to goodness we'd never taken her to board. After this, you keep away from her friends. Do you understand?"

Julia nodded again. Then she passed her aunt, went into the house, and up to her room, where, having torn off her hat, she threw herself down on her bed, and burst into a storm of tears.

"The whole world is against me," she told herself.

Chapter VI

Simon Scudder's unexpected disclosure had set surging in David Brinton a bewildering welter of complex emotions. It was like the dropping of acid into a clear glass of alkaline bicarbonate. The whole admixture bubbled and boiled with an opaque effervescence. Conscientiously, habitually systematic, he executed his morning errands with as scrupulous a care as he ordinarily devoted to this portion of his daily routine; yet, always, through the warp and woof of his mental processes ran the conflicting strands of this problem, so abruptly presented and so engrossingly serious.

And when, finally, these duties completed, he turned his steps homeward, he chose to prolong the journey by means of a seldom traversed, circuitous route for the express purpose of gaining time and freedom from interruption in which gravely to consider and justly to attribute.

There was no doubt in his mind of the identity of Anne Wharton and the so-called "Winchester woman." That had been demonstrated to him, not by anything so fallible as a mere likeness between a photograph, reproduced crudely in a newspaper, and a living face as he had come to know it in something less than a fortnight of intimate association under his own roof-tree, but by so small, yet convincing, a thing as a cameo brooch of unique shape and bizarre workmanship.

At first sight of the half-tone in the clipping this odd bit of jewelry had caught his eyes with convicting certainty even before he saw the face itself. More than once, of late, he had spoken of the brooch to its wearer, and had learned that it was an heirloom from her mother, for whom it had been made by a young jeweler of Whitby, in England; a consumptive lad in whom she had taken a charitable interest.

It struck Brinton as curiously fateful that about the only mention of relatives or friends made by Mrs. Wharton had been in connection with this brooch, which in the end was to be the means of opening the door to the chamber in which lay her carefully and closely guarded secret. And it occurred to him now, too, that his interpretation of the closed and tied *o* and *a* of her letter was fully borne out. Confined to a single word, he had chosen to believe that her reticence hinged on a single subject, occurrence or event. And that it had been revealed in that particular word "isolated" because it was by reason of this one zealously-held secret that she most desired isolation.

In his cursory glance over the text of the Scudder clippings he had caught glimpses of allegations which by no reach of the imagination could he ever reconcile with the wearer of the brooch as he knew her. Some of the phrases recurred to him now, as, unmindful of the burning sun, he plodded slowly with head bent in thought along the dusty country road, between meadows in which cattle grazed, and wide-spreading fields of ripening grain.

They were horrid phrases, reeking, many of them, with a brutally frank significance, which caused a shudder to ripple like a chill adown the verterbræ of the shocked and sympathetic Brinton. For, in spite of them, in spite of Simon Scudder's freely expressed scepticism, his heart and his faith were quite altogether with that pallid, frail woman in mourning who had so recently become a member of his household, who had at their first meeting so unveiled herself to him, in a way, with her quotation about poetry being the sister of sorrow, about suffering and tears, and the heart as a

poem. Nor was there anything in their more recent intercourse, now that she was beginning to bloom afresh, to make him less sympathetic or less loyal.

And yet, unbelievable as her guilt seemed to him, inclined as he was to mercy, the question which gave him battle was as to whether he had the right to be thus led, unresisting and unquestioning, by his own charitable inclinations; permitting the while a continuance of that intimacy with his family which her residence in his house of necessity involved.

Under this newly arisen condition, in view of all that he had learned—in view, indeed, of all that perhaps might be true though he had not learned it—was he, as a conscientious father and brother-in-law privileged to permit this association to continue?

It was, in the end, this consideration of Julia that decided him. Not only was she of an impressionable age, but of an exceptionally impressionable nature; and it was a fear lest in some way, occult even, too innocently subtle for either intention or discernment, she should be influenced by that which lay secret beneath an impeccable exterior.

He wished now that he might have read what her counsel had so eloquently pleaded in "the Winchester woman's" defense. Since it had weighed so strongly with the jury, how much more convincing might it have been to him, already prejudiced in her favor!

Having thus reached a decision and been assured of its justice by subsequent reflection, Brinton found before him a second, and almost equally trying problem. How was he, without divulging so much as a hint of what he had learned, to bring about the departure of Mrs. Wharton, and at the same time spare Julia and Alma from all knowledge of the woman's miserable story? So formidable loomed the undertaking that more than once this kindly man was driven back to a reconsideration of the original question. And when at length he came to what is called the wood road, an umbrose avenue, cool and wonderfully still, winding through a strip of forest, to issue finally within a hundred yards of his own back door, he was still in earnest mental debate.

Walking hat in hand through the grateful cool of the wood he had eventually progressed to a tentative putting together of the sentence with which to broach the subject to the unhappy woman, when, in rounding a sharp turn of the road, his design was cast wofully askew by his coming abruptly upon the hapless lady of his thoughts, looking anything but that as she smiled up at him in calm recognition from a mossy seat at the foot of ancient oak.

An added effect of the unexpected encounter was palpable disturbance of Brinton's usual ease of manner. His greeting, though meant to be cordial, was as he realized in a degree strained. He saw that she observed this, and it tended further to rob him of his habitual composure and felicity of address. But Mrs. Wharton was more solicitious than surprised.

"You're tired, Mr. Brinton," she declared anxiously, springing lightly to her feet. "I can see you are. You've been walking in the hot sun, and it's been a little too much for you. Do, please, sit here and lean back against the tree. It's wonderfully restful."

But Brinton could not be persuaded. He insisted that he was "all right."

"I'll tell you," he went on, "you sit right where you were, and, if it will please you, I'll rest a bit on the boulder there," indicating a conveniently located stone across the road.

It would please her, she said; and Brinton sat down.

The effect of the incident was to restore, in a measure at least, his self-command. And it occurred to him that he might not again have so fitting an opportunity for the exercise of the distasteful yet obligatory duty on which he had been dwelling.

She, however, had already taken the guidance of the conversation into her own capable hands. And as he interestedly listened, fascinated by the melodic charm of her soft, purling southern prolation, never so manifest as now;

and even more by an underlying, indefinaable, yet all pervading quality of personality, so utterly at odds with everything he had heard or suspected, he came to question whether, after all, he had not been too hasty in his judgment and too severe in his sentence.

She had begun by telling him how, on the day following her arrival in Northborough, she had found this spot in the forest's heart, and how, nearly every day since, she had spent happy hours here in reading and meditation, with only the birds, the squirrels and the chipmunks for companions. And at this his reason had rallied, reinforcing his sentiment and his inclination, with the question as to how it would be possible for her, were her hands stained by a crime so heinous, to face here in the awful silence of this arboreal temple, the ever-condemning visage of her own wretched conscience.

Thus engrossed in analysis of the emergent situation, Brinton's replies and answers were for the most part perfunctory. Indeed, for a little, he became so totally lost in revery as quite to miss the thread of what she was saying. So that when, all at once, he was caught up by an abrupt change of tone, a lowered key, a still softer cadence, he listened intently enough, yet all the while conscious that he should never know just how she had approached this astounding disclosure, or whether it was something in his own manner which had invited it.

"I knew the first moment I saw you, down on the station platform, that I should tell you some day." Those were the first words that came to him at the moment of his arresting.

He saw that she was no longer looking at him. She was leaning forward, and her eyes were on her white hands, folded together on her scarcely whiter lap. All her old pallor appeared to have returned to her, and for some reason —possibly it was her pose, leaning forward that way with shoulders bent— she seemed more frail than ever.

"I didn't think it would be so soon," she went on quietly, as if talking to herself. "I didn't see how I could bear to speak of it again, ever. And yet I knew that I should—to you. Oh, just to you. Because I felt, somehow, even then, that you would have a right to know, and that, whether I told you or not, you would learn it all, surely, in some way. And that if you learned it from someone else you wouldn't, maybe, just understand, as I was sure —always so sure—you would if I told you."

She paused for a moment, but she neither moved nor looked up; and the solemn stillness which enfolded them seemed to Brinton like some tangible thing; some great, silent, sympathetic witness that sat bowed, with closed eyes and bent ear, listening, not alone to the woman's words, but to the throbbing of her heart. He sat, himself, very still, with clasped hands between his knees and his gaze resting on her like a caress.

And now she was going on again, telling him much that he already knew, but in a different way, with illuminating side lights, and thoroughly human touches that appealed both to his reason and his sympathies. Telling it all, too, in her calm, low voice, which quavered at times the least bit.

One of these times, he remembered afterward, was when she had spoken of the child that had never lived, and of her own bruised body, and the imprint of a brutal, murderous boot-toe.

Whether the recital had occupied minutes or hours Brinton could never determine definitely. He knew only that the pose of neither ever changed; that he had sat there unmoving throughout it all, silent, too, and that the picture of her—that delicate, trustful figure in white, with drooping head and lowered eyes, would last always in his memory.

When it was over and the tension of the telling was relaxed, she wept, and Brinton, his mind swept wholly clear of all prejudice, his fear of an evil influence, remote if not fanciful, overcome and routed by a resurgent and more catholic charity, rising from his seat on the boulder and crossing the little dividing space, rested for just a mo-

ment a soothing, gentle hand upon the satin softness of her shining dark hair.

He did not speak to her. Somehow, it appeared to him—possibly to them both—that there was no need of words; that to say he believed her would be only to cheapen—to add alloy to the pure virgin gold of their complete understanding, of which the very air and light, it seemed, must hold a concordant consciousness.

Chapter VII

The absence of his daughter from her place at the dinner-table that noontide proved the one incident of sufficient potency to distract Brinton's contemplation from the events of the morning. For two or three minutes after sitting down with the others his glance had fluttered between her vacant chair and the open doors to drawing-room and hall, his cooling soup untouched. Twice he had interrupted the process to let it rest enquiringly upon the face of his sister-in-law. But both times she had, apparently with purpose, averted her eyes.

"Where is Julia?" he at length asked.

"She has a headache. She is in her room," Alma answered. And there was that in her accompanying look which he read as an endeavor to discourage any further pursuance of the subject.

He was not, however, to be thus easily diverted. A headache that could keep his child from a meal was without precedent, and therefore too serious to be lightly ignored. He recalled now the recent change in her demeanor, and was stricken with an engulfing dread of serious illness.

"But Julia never has headaches," he pursued, his anxiety reflected in his tone. "Have you seen her? Perhaps she's feverish. I've noticed that she hasn't been quite like herself for some days. Hadn't we better send for Dr. Morly?"

Miss Fielder colored. Why would David never realize that they were not alone? That there were matters impossible of discussion in the presence of a third party—practically a stranger; a boarder? She had tried to warn him, but he had been obstinately blind to her signal. Well, then, he should have the truth.

"There's nothing in the world the matter with her but temper," she snapped acridly. "I found it necessary to reprimand her, and she resented it."

"Wouldn't it have been better to consult me first?" he asked quietly.

"You weren't here, and—I had to act at once. She was going automobiling with a—with an absolutely strange young man."

"Really?" he asked in confusion. "That isn't like Julia. I—I can't reconcile it. Did she tell you where she had met him? Anything about him?"

"Only that Mrs. Wharton introduced him," and she flung an accusing glance at the boarder.

Brinton also looked at Anne. "If he was a friend of Mrs. Wharton's—" he began. But before he could say more Mrs. Wharton interrupted him.

"He was not a friend," she corrected. "Only an acquaintance. I feared that you might disapprove, and so told Miss Fielder of what he proposed."

"I see. And—and you, Alma? You saw him?"

"No. He'd gone when I got there."

"Then you didn't stop it, really, after all? Are you sure that Julia didn't decline of her own accord?"

"Mrs. Wharton said that she was going."

"Pardon me," Anne corrected. "I said I feared that Julia was about to go. I gathered that she saw no harm in it, poor child."

"May I ask who the young man was?" David said.

"A newspaper man from New York who is spending his vacation at Parmalee's. I met him in the South."

Then, looking straight at Brinton, she added, with purposed illumination: "He was down there reporting a trial for his paper."

"And he called here this morning to see you?"

"Yes. I heard that he was at Parmalee's for the fishing, and wrote him, asking him to come."

"And—and Julia?"

"She happened to come out on the veranda while we were talking."

"After a moment's silence Brinton observed: "What puzzles me is why Julia should take the matter so to heart. I can't see anything in what you both tell me to give her a headache or keep her from her dinner."

Impulsively Mrs. Wharton rose from the table and dropped her napkin beside her plate.

"I'll go to her," she announced, "and see if I can persuade her to come down."

As she left the room David Brinton, having already murmured his thanks, following her with appreciative eyes.

"An admirable woman," he commented, *sotto voce,* half to himself, yet not low enough to escape the hearing of his sister-in-law.

Miss Fielder's lips tightened and her color deepened.

"Good heavens, David!" she exclaimed irritably. "What fools you men are!"

The outbreak, so unusual, so out of keeping with the Alma character as hitherto revealed to him, startled him, robbing him for the minute of words with which to reply.

"How under the sun you can be so blind is enough to drive a sane person half crazy. Admirable, indeed! She's a snake in the grass. I've seen it from the first. I can't make out what it is, but she's come here to hide something. She wants a refuge, and she's making up to you, David, determined you shall give it to her. Not for this summer only, but for life."

"Oh, Alma!" he found voice to exclaim. "That's absurd!"

"It's the truth," she maintained. "A one-eyed person could see that. She's acting every minute. Of course she didn't want Julia to go automobile-riding with this acquaintance of hers. She was afraid he might let something drop about her. That was the reason. Or part of it. The other part was to show you, or make you believe, how interested she is in your child. But Julia doesn't like her. That first evening was enough for her. She's hardly spoken to her since. And now she's trying to make it appear to you that she has enough influence with your daughter to quiet her aching head and fetch her down to the table, when I couldn't make her so much as unlock her door. But she's undertaken more than she can accomplish. You see if she hasn't. Julia'll send her back with a flea in her ear. You see if she doesn't."

Brinton smiled tolerantly. "I'm sorry you're so bitter, Alma," was all he said. It was useless to discuss the matter with her. He knew now so much more than she did. And, having learned it as he had, to reveal so much even as a hint of the sadly touching story would have been a most unpardonable breach of confidence.

As for Julia's seeming change of attitude towards Mrs. Wharton, he had had from her a perfectly satisfactory explanation. And, as if to corroborate this, there had been the incident of this morning. Had there been a coolness between them it was inconceivable that the girl could have met this newspaper-man friend of Mrs. Wharton's and been asked to go driving with him. No, the two edges of the thing didn't join.

But, in one way, Alma Fielder was right. David's sight was not all it should have been. Otherwise, he would have seen through his sister-in-law. And he didn't. She resented the intimacy that had grown up between him and Mrs. Wharton—writhed, even, over those long tête-à-tête evenings of communion in the study-library or behind the veranda trellis—because she was inordinately fond of David herself and had always believed that some day, in the not very distant future, she would, herself, be asked to fill her dead sister's place in his life, not, as now, merely in one respect—that of housekeeper—but wholly, in all ways, as wife, and mother to his daughter.

Five minutes passed in silence. Then

faintly there came to them the echo of light footsteps descending the stairs. Brinton's eyes turned to the door which opened on the hall, an expectant light in them. Another instant and the light was one of gladness.

Julia and Mrs. Wharton had come in together, smiling, their arms locked.

"You see it wasn't such a bad headache, after all," said the boarder.

Chapter VIII

Ruled so largely by impulse as Julia Brinton was, there were, nevertheless, occasions when, giving herself up to a more or less ruthlessly honest introspection, she listened heedingly to the dictates of a cool, discerning, and rather canny judgment. It had been so on this morning, so provocative of emotional stress and agitation. Impulse had sent her flying to the privacy of her room and locked her in. It had flung her in an agony of self-pity outstretched across the immaculate whiteness of her virginal bed and loosed the floodgates of her tears. It had dictated, too, her acerbate refusal to admit her Aunt Alma, and her invention of a headache as excuse for her action.

In the interval preceding the coming of Mrs. Wharton, however, the young woman had achieved a contrasting calm, born of a more or less exhaustive and repetitional weighing of the phases or circumstances of her experience, and, though her first inclination was to treat this intrusion as she had the other, she promptly adopted the wiser, as it seemed now to her, second course and admitted the suppliant.

Even as she turned back the key in her door a dozen questions framed themselves in her mind—vital questions that she could not, consistently, restrain while there was a chance left of having them answered. Her pride might forbid, but there was something within her more compelling than pride. And it was separate and apart from ordinary curiosity. It had to do with love and desire, with her peace of mind; with the whole color of her present and her future; involving, she believed, either an endless grief or an unceasing happiness.

Yet in the presence of the boarder she stood, at first, silent and a little shame-stricken, the questioning halted and held in abeyance by the swift urgency of her visitor's:

"Come, hurry, my dear! Your father's waiting dinner for you. I know how you feel. But you must be brave. Bathe your face. He mustn't know you've been crying. Just as quickly as you can, now. All it needs is a little cold water. Please, please make haste. And we'll go down together."

Caught up by the stronger mind, swayed by the more positive personality, Julia obeyed without protest. And, as she poured the water from her ewer into her basin, saturated her dainty, blue-edged washcloth, and padded coolingly her too-pink eyelids and laved her too-pale and slightly discolored cheeks, Mrs. Wharton continued less rapidly and in a slightly lowered tone:

"And after dinner, Julia, dear, you and I will go down to the glen together and talk everything over. I want you to look on me as if I were your elder sister, if you can. There's nothing I wouldn't do for you. I'm sure you've been hating me for what happened this morning. But you'll understand when you know. I'm sure you will. And now, because you are doing what I ask you, I'll make everything easy for you at the table. I've already smoothed things pretty well, and if you'll only rely on me I'll finish them."

It was this promise that had worked the miracle of readjustment and restored harmony, even to the linked arms and Julia's fainter reflection of the boarder's sunny, gladsome smile.

And the complete disconcertion of Miss Fielder on finding her prophecies set at naught aided not a little in relieving any lingering embarrassment on the part of the others.

"I think," Anne ventured in pursuance of her policy of making light of the reported headache, "that it must have been just a touch of neuralgia.

I've had it. It comes suddenly, and while it lasts it seems almost unbearable. But it goes usually as quickly as it comes."

"That sounds to me perfectly reasonable," Brinton agreed. "I hope, my daughter, you'll have no return of it."

The glen, of which Mrs. Wharton had spoken as the scene of the proposed afternoon conference, lay but a stone's throw distant from the spot which that morning had witnessed her revelation to the girl's father. It dipped suddenly from a point on the left of the wood road, where a rude wooden bridge spanned a small waterfall of barely ten feet. Following a more gradual descent the falling water divided the glen as a shallow, murmuring brook, above the surface of which stones, worn smooth by attrition in times of freshet, lifted their grey surfaces and formed a means of dry crossing.

At a point a little way down the stream there was a rustic summer-house, built by a tenant of the property years ago and of late fallen into a state of age-worn and weather-beaten decrepitude. Here, in the cool of these forest depths, shaded by the verdure of boughs which met and embraced above the narrow stream, Anne and Julia sat side by side on a sagging seat of the summer-house, as ten days ago they had sat on the boulder at the top of Lookout Hill.

The girl, in the beginning, had been distinctly ill-at-ease. She had relapsed in a measure into that condition of restraint which for a week at least had marked her attitude towards the woman who wished so earnestly to be her friend. And it had been Anne's part to restore once more her confidence and re-establish their relation to a more friendly and mutually sympathetic footing.

There was something, she felt sure, that had risen between them to cause this breach: something that Julia had learned, or fancied, or imagined, and was stubbornly hiding from her. She had thought at first—until today, in fact—that it had to do with her having written that letter to Alan Woodward, which, instead of bringing him openly, had apparently only kept him away altogether. But it had been made plain to her on the veranda, that morning, that, unknown to her, he and Julia had evidently communicated in the interim. That cry of surprise: "Why—why, Mr. Woodward, I was just going to—!" taken in connection with the girl's careful attiring and all that had followed, had told the fact, while it concealed the details. She asked herself, now, whether it was reasonable to think that they had actually met in secret. And if so, whether he had told Julia anything of her story. But almost instantly she realized that this latter question had already been answered. For it was very evident, even if he had received the letter which he denied receiving, that he must have failed to connect the signature, "Anne Wharton," with the "Agatha Winchester" he had once known.

She was sitting silent for just a minute now while these thoughts raced through her mind, and she debated whether it would be wise to force the issue with a frankly-put question. Her elbow rested on a broken bit of railing, and her gaze had strayed a little beyond their shelter to where a robin was making short, quick runs and sudden pauses over the dank sward. He paused just then where the light breeze had lifted a frond of fern, revealing beneath it a torn half-page of note paper, on which there showed three or four lines of writing in a heavy, vertical hand.

Something apparently quite outside of herself impelled Anne to its possession, and she had slipped beneath the broken rail and snatched it up before she was really quite conscious of what she was doing.

Julia, who had also at the moment been deep in as earnest meditation, turned sharply at her companion's agile exit, to see her standing there, not more than two yards away, a fragment of paper in her hand and her eyes bent upon it. Intuitively the girl realized what was happening. She remembered

instantly the occasion of a torn letter; of how she had recovered all but one of its four severed pieces; and of how that fourth bit had so aggravatingly eluded her.

Before she could check herself she was crying:

"Oh, Mrs. Wharton, please—"

But she was already too late.

Anne had taken it in to the last word. She had read:

". . . must see you again on Wednesday. I'll be waiting in the summer-house at three o'clock. Oh, dearest, I'm so wretched! I never slept a wink all last night. What can you think of me? I want to hear you say again that I have not been wicked, and that you'll . . ."

She turned at Julia's cry, her fingers busy, even then, in tearing the secret into smaller and smaller bits. In her eyes, so deeply and liquidly blue, there was a serious sadness but no reproach. There was rather a sort of stricken yearning. She did not return as she had slipped out, but passed on a few steps farther to the entrance, still pursuing her work of destruction, which she ended by throwing the final infinitely tiny morsels into the air to be caught by the light breeze and carried off like thistle-down or snowflakes.

She entered quickly then to catch the risen and panic-stricken Julia in closely enfolding arms, pressing her warm and vibrant young body to her breast, and whispering gentle, kindly, sisterly words of love and reassurance.

"Your secret's safe with me, darling," she crooned softly. "It's for the best that I should know it. For I, dear, of all persons, can understand as well as sympathize. You see, I've been through it all myself, and—oh, much more—things hideously worse, too. And all because, like you, I had no mother to guide me, or warn me. Nor no older sister, either; nor, even, a boarder in the house, such as myself now, who might have seen, in her broader knowledge of the world, and—and, at least, done what she could."

The girl was sobbing now as if her heart would break, and Anne released one arm from about her that she might pat in soft caress the bowed head resting against her shoulder, as she went on in the same strain, pleading for full confidence and unwavering trust. It was no time, then, she knew, to tell her of the real Alan Woodward and his iniquitous unworthiness. For it was plainly evident that she had given her heart and soul to him in the first awakening of her fresh young womanhood, and that she was not prepared for the casting-down of her idol.

That must come later. For the present she could be asked only to wait, while Anne would pray and work, diligently and tactfully, hoping that, meanwhile, the creature would reveal himself, or that Julia's eyes might be miraculously opened.

They sat down again presently, and after a little the sobbing seemed to wear itself out. Following this, with almost startling abruptness, the young woman wiped her eyes and her tear-stained cheeks, and in tones still somewhat choked, reproached herself openly for her loss of self-control.

"I'm such a baby!" she said, with a sniffle. "And I'm so ashamed of myself. And—and—oh, dear!—you are so good to me, when I don't deserve it a bit that anyone should be. You, really, least of all. For I have been horrid to you. I know I have."

"Horrid, dear! How?"

"Oh, you must have seen. But—but it was all because I was doing something behind your back that I had promised you I wouldn't. I—I've been seeing him, here, almost every afternoon. Yesterday he couldn't come, and we were to meet this morning instead."

"Yes, yes, I know," Anne said soothingly. "But we won't speak of that. And you must not think of it. We must look ahead, now, dear. Looking back won't help matters in the least. And, remember, I'm not going to reproach you, ever. It was all my fault for binding you to a promise. I should have known better."

"And—and, you see," Julia protested, for it occurred to her just then that, having herself been so magnanimously relieved of all blame, a defence of her lover was demanded, "he never received your letter. If he had it would have been different."

Anne, though convinced that her letter had not miscarried, made no denial. "Alas, how easily things go wrong!" she quoted. "Do you love him very much, dear?"

Julia nodded, turning her face away to hide the risen blush.

"Very much," she murmured.

"Of course you do. And nothing could change you, could it?"

"I don't think so. Not anything."

"Suppose you learned that he was married? That his wife is still living? Would that?"

There was a moment of hesitation. Then:

"He isn't married. I know he isn't. He told me. But, even if he was, I'd feel just the same. It would be wrong, I know. But—I—I—Oh, how could I help it?"

"Of course you couldn't," said Anne. No. The time for revelation, for attempted disillusion, was not yet. To be of any service to her she must, for the time being, float beside her in the same current, as those twin twigs there in the brook. To oppose her, to try to head her off would be but to court disaster, to lose her.

She was wondering, though, back of all this marshalling of subtle purpose, whether the bit of writing she had read meant all that it so noxiously suggested.

Chapter IX

For the rest of that day and throughout the morning of the next Anne managed, without apparent intention, to keep in closest touch with the aberrant Julia. When she was not with her she knew precisely where she was. She had not attempted to exact another promise from her. There had, indeed, been not so much as an implied understanding. As certain as she had ever been certain of anything that a tryst with Woodward had been made and was to be kept, she had waited vainly for the girl to confess it. Beyond pleading for a confidence without reserve she had asked no questions and would ask none. Above all things, she felt, she must not appear inquisitive. It was a matter for the most delicate handling, and a single false move might open the door to irreparable consequences. For she sensed that, in spite of all that had happened and been said in the summer house, or afterwards, there was, on Julia's part an underlying questioning of motive, which was inducive of reservation and a certain attitude of withdrawal.

And this, indeed, was the fact. For, throughout the entire experience there had been in the girl's mind a persistent echo of Alan Woodward's hurried words in the interval following Mrs. Wharton's exit from the veranda:

"She's so jealous of you she'll hesitate at nothing to keep you from me."

Following dinner on the second day Julia had gone to her room, and a few minutes later Anne, too, had retired to hers, taking care lightly to mount the stairs, so that no sound of her steps might echo, and as noiselessly to enter her own chamber and close the door upon her.

Her room and Julia's adjoined. Originally they had been a single large apartment. But in the remodeling of the old house it had been divided, and the separating wall was so thin that even the faintest sounds penetrated.

The boarder sat down softly close to this wall and near the window out of which she had witnessed the appearance of Alan Woodward on the morning of the preceding day. Julia, just beyond the frail partition, was moving about restlessly. She heard her open a closet-door. Evidently she was about to make a change of toilet. Then the creak of a chair came to her. A shoe dropped to the floor. In this way Anne followed almost every detail of the change. A little traveling clock facing her from her bureau, across the room, told her that it was not quite half-past one, and

she argued that the appointment, probably at the summer house, had been made for two. For a little while she considered the advisability of forestalling the meeting by arming herself with a book and going there to read, but rejected it as too obvious. Neither could she consider eavesdropping from ambush. Such a course might be justified by the circumstances and the merit of the object to be attained; but all her instincts rebelled against it.

Eventually she determined not to anticipate, but to follow. When she had heard Julia leave her room and go down the stairs she waited a moment watching from behind the curtain of her window and listening for the opening and closing of the screen door. But when no sound came to her, or no girlish figure emerged onto the flagged path, she was more than ever convinced of the tryst and its location. She ran out into the passage, and along it to the bathroom at its farther end. And from the bathroom window she saw her self-chosen charge crossing quickly and with evident stealth through the vegetable garden, to disappear a few seconds later amid the network of trees that formed the outer border of the wood.

Returning to her room for hat, sunshade and book, Anne descended and left the house by the front exit. Her course was less direct, but it was designedly so. Moreover her destination was not quite the same. For she had decided, at length, on her own favorite nook at that turn of the wood road where but yesterday she had told her own story to this girl's father. It was not within sight of the summer house, nor even the brook, its waterfall, or the bridge that crossed it. Neither was it within hearing distance of ordinary conversation. But a cry of alarm would carry to it, and no vehicle could either reach the trysting place or return to the outer world without turning its angle.

Anne chose, however, to forego the mossy seat at the road's edge. Back from it was a little clearing, almost circular, where a fallen tree trunk with part of one unsevered upstanding branch afforded nearly as comfortable a resting place. Here she could see whatever passed, without herself being seen. The light, though, was too dim for reading, and it was that which caused her ordinarily to prefer the more exposed location. But today her book had been brought simply as a blind should occasion arise to present herself. Her mind was too filled with realities to find anything distracting in fiction.

The afternoon was excessively hot and almost breathless. Even here in the wood, usually cool, there was but little diminution of high temperature. The air seemed stagnant and the scents oppressive. A profound silence reigned, unbroken by so much as the twitter of a winged denizen. And Anne, sitting on her tree trunk, waited with straining ears and a slowly growing impatience. It was not quite two when she sat down and now, on consulting her watch, she found it was nearly half past. She drew the conclusion that Woodward, eager as Julia, had been more than punctual, though she had failed to discover the fresh imprint of rubber-tired wheels on the plastic loam of the road.

And then, while in the act of returning the watch to her waistband, there came faintly to her ears the murmur of a speeding motor. Suddenly tensed, her heart beats quickened to the nearing pulse of the engine, she peered from her place between the grey perpendicular boles. She expected only to see the car flash by. For from the direction of the sound, it was coming, not going, and it was shamefully late. It was a case, however, of "much haste less speed," and she was destined to a surprise. Woodward, miscalculating the narrowness of the road and the sharpness of the angle, caused his vehicle to leap the low rise of the opposite side, yet spared himself from serious disaster by a swift throwing on of brakes.

She saw that the forward wheels had thus become wedged between the stone on which Brinton had sat yesterday, while she made her confession, and an adjacent stump. The impact had flung

him forward across the steering wheel, where, for just a moment, he hung limp. Then she heard him swear roundly, and saw him, a little clumsily and uncertainly, effect his release and stand down, and there was that in his utterance and his movement which was convincingly informatory. He had been drinking.

The discovery wrought in her a fresh uneasiness. She knew something of him when under the influence of alcohol. and the knowledge, in association with her interest in his present errand, filled her with misgiving. She was tempted, for a moment, to gain the summer house in advance of him and warn the waiting and enamored girl of her peril. But she feared the insufficiency of her influence. She might only serve to make bad worse. On the other hand, might not the very fact of the man's semi-intoxication serve, unaided by her, to cause a revulsion in Julia's feeling for him?

In the end this latter hope prevailed. She kept to her place, unstirring, while he labored, with much perspiring and considerable muttered profanity, to release the imprisoned car, nor left it when, eventually, he succeeded and drove off. But she keened her hearing the more acutely a minute or two later for any outcry, and even rose in readiness for haste should such alarm ensue.

Its absence, however, was only temporarily reassuring; and after waiting for a space which seemed endless she crossed the road, plunged into the thicket on its opposite side, and stole cautiously in the general direction of the glen, her virtuous resolve neither to spy nor to eavesdrop disregarded under the lash of the new and more pressing exigency. She came at length to where, twenty yards away, the scene of meeting was visible through a rift in the leafage of some young elders; and she paused there, peering.

Not a whisper reached her. They were still standing, just within the summer house, she leaning against him, and he with one arm about her waist. And he appeared to be talking hurriedly. If she might only hear what he was saying! In haste she glanced about her, hoping for an equally well-guarded but nearer vantage-point, and descried on a slightly lower level—on the very rim of the little clearing, in fact, just beyond where she had found the piece of torn letter—a screen of low silky willows. She gained it without a sound, and very quickly. But, already, the pair had changed their grouping. Julia was no longer within his embrace. She had evidently stepped back from him, and she was shaking her head in a not very decisive negative. And then Anne heard him say:

"But you must. How would next week or next month be any better? And what's the use of my seeing your father? Once we're married we'll send him a wire. And he'll wire us his blessing, I'm not made of ice, nor even stone. I want you, kid! And I want you now."

"Oh, but not tonight," came Julia's protest. "Please just meet Daddy once. Mrs. Wharton will introduce you. I'll make her. She's so good. She'll do anything for me. And then, if—"

"Not on your life," he interrupted. "Now listen, little one. It's tonight, or never, with me. I've got to be back in New York by Sunday. That will give us a day in Boston alone together before I buckle down to the demnition grind again. Here's your chance. Take it or leave it. And there's no time to argue, for I've got to get back to Parmalee's and pack up. What is it to be?"

For a full half-minute, Julia stood speechless, fixing him with pleading, pathetic eyes.

"Give me till tonight," she begged. "I must think."

He joined her again, wrapping both arms around her, and drawing her close to him.

"You must care a lot for me," he told her, "not to know your mind yet. But, listen. I'll tell you what I'll do, but you must promise me something. I'll give you to midnight. At twelve sharp, I'll be waiting outside your front yard with the flivver. But two minutes will be my limit. Not a second more.

If you're not there by 12:02 I'll be gone. Understand that? That will give you all of nine hours to think it over. But you've got to do the thinking without help. Give me your word that you'll not speak of it to a soul, and least of all to 'Mrs. Wharton,' as you call her; though it's no more hers than Sally Brown's yours. Do you agree? Quick, now! Yes, or no?"

Anne saw the girl nod her head, but the "yes" was so low and faint that it died before reaching her. Then there was a hurried, almost brutally violent and impassioned kiss from the man, and he was off without another word.

Julia moved to the door, her eyes following him. When Anne could no longer see him, she noted a quick smile on the girl's face and saw her wave her hand. And a second later she heard the clutter of his "flivver's" exhaust. Then Julia turned back again, sat down, and resting her arm on the broken railing buried her face in the angle of her elbow.

Chapter X

Ordinarily, the Brinton homestead was wrapped in somnolent silence and draped in inky darkness each night by eleven o'clock. But at quarter to twelve on the night of Julia's tryst and Anne's eavesdropping lights burned in two of the upper rooms and sleep was far away. There was, however, an evident effort on the part of the two occupants to reduce all sound to the minimum; and each, in spite of the oppressive heat which had carried over from the day into this much of the night, moved and was busy behind closely closed shutters and drawn curtains.

For nine hours each had wrestled with her own individual problem. With one it had been simply a choice of two alternatives—a yes or a no. But with the other it had been a more complex matter, involving a course of action to be followed should she ascertain that the girl's ultimate decision was the one which Woodward had so persistently urged.

Several plans had suggested themselves. It would have been a simple matter to inform David Brinton of what portended and thus shift the responsibility to his shoulders. But she questioned that that would be quite honorable. Moreover, while it would frustrate the elopement for the moment, it might only encourage future rebellion and eventual accomplishment. For she had no faith in the man's threat of desertion in the event of his present effort not succeeding.

It had occurred to her, as a safeguard, to turn Julia's clock back while she was at supper, but when she attempted to enter the room was balked by finding the door locked. A personal appeal in advance she had hardly considered, lest the very fact that she had stooped to spying might sway the girl to take the step when already resolved otherwise. The idea of threatening her, or of, at the last moment, confronting her and holding her back by force, declaring that she would arouse the house unless obeyed, was open to the same objection as making the facts known to her father.

What she wished—what she must do—was not merely to save Julia from her present peril, but from future danger from the same source, and, at the same time, if possible spare both her and that dear man whose daughter she was from the pain of mutual awareness. And to this end she had at length worked out a design, quixotic in inception and demanding the utmost tact and finesse in execution.

Not until after half past eleven had Anne's listening ear, pressed against the rose-trellis wallpaper. made certain, crushing thus her final lingering hope. that Julia's infatuation was not to be denied. Very distinctly, then, had she detected the all-too-evident preparations for departure, including the removal of belongings from drawers and closet and their hasty packing in a suitcase which creaked with each fresh accession. All uncertainty thus deplorably made clear she had at once set about her own somewhat similar em-

ployment, moving even more warily lest she in her turn should give warning of being on the alert.

Her packing was limited—a small handbag of alligator skin, in which she placed only a few toilet requisites—and involved but a brief moment. To dress, however, took more time. For she had been waiting in the furnace of that closed room in the scantest of scant attire. And now, as she nervously, yet cautiously and with all possible haste, reclothed herself, a fear tore at her lest after all she might be too late.

At intervals, throughout the evening, there had echoed reverbant but distant thunder. In the midst of her dressing it had sounded again, louder and more prolonged. And, as she finished, even to the wrapping about her of a long black cloak like garment, another peal told it her that the storm was working nearer. At the very last she unlocked one of the drawers of her bureau, and taking a revolver from it, dropped it into a pocket of her outer investment.

With her light out, she halted still an instant to press her ear once more to the partitioning wall. Julia was moving with an even more restless activity in the face of the flying minutes and the imminence of the appointed hour. Sustained by this reassurance, Anne slipped from her room into the dim passage, and stole soundlessly down the shallow stairs to the black well of hall below, through which she groped her way to the door.

As she turned back the key she questioned whether or not to extract it and lock the door from the outside. The few seconds thus gained—for Julia, halted here, would either resort to the back door or climb through a window—might mean the difference between success and failure. But wiser counsel prevailed. She thought of morning, and the questioning that would be provoked by such a discovery.

She knew, as she crept through the pitch darkness down the flagged path to the gate, that she was fully five minutes ahead of time, and she began to speculate on the likelihood of Woodward anticipating the moment. In driving twenty miles from Parmalee's it was not reasonable to expect precise punctuality. A variance of five minutes either way was the preponderant probability. And she was banking on him being early. If late there would be two women waiting instead of one, and Julia's voice would guide him against mistake.

She passed the gate, pausing beside the lilac bush which spread beyond the paling at its left. So far as she could see there was no car there. Certainly no car with lights. But if he had extinguished his lights! In her caution she had opened and closed the gate without a sound, taking care even to muffle the click of its latch. And he might be depending on that click to signal the girl's coming.

She moved a few paces farther to the left, walking close to the edge of the roadway and straining her eyes. Then she coughed—forced a faint throat-clearing sound—but there was no response. At almost the same instant, though, the road for a single second was lighted up with the dazzling brilliance of a lightning flash. And she saw that it was empty.

Dismayed, Anne, in the deeper black that succeeded, crept back to her lilac bush, while the world about her seemed split asunder by a deafening crash of thunder. And, immediately following it, came a gust of wind, waking the night's relapse to stillness with a clamor of rustling leaves.

A minute—endless as time, yet brief as a dream—went by. The wind rose to a gale, and its roar in the trees above her was like that of an angry mammoth. All lesser sounds were drowned by it. The branches of the lilac bush lashed her from her refuge, to be buffeted by the unbroken tempest. She stood out in the open, her back to the hurricane which tore at her.

Then, for a second or two, not more, there was a slight cessation, a little lull; and from behind her, borne on the momentarily sobered wind, there reached her that longed-for throb of a

speeding motor; and, turning quickly, she caught the gleam of its lamps. But at the same instant, not by reason of any one of the five senses, but some infallible sixth, she was conscious that Julia was at the gate, fumbling nervously with its latch.

To keep her ample cloaklike wrap from being whipped to ribbons Anne had thrust her left hand through the handle of her satchel, carrying it thus on her wrist, and plunged that hand and her right as well into the low side pockets. Her percipience now was preternaturally acute, and her wits as sensitively alert. Her right hand was clutching the weapon her pocket held, and without hesitation, she drew it forth.

Then she wheeled. The lightning flash which at that crisis lifted dazzlingly the storm's veil revealed the two figures so nearly of a size pallidly facing one another across the gate's whitewashed palings. And it glinted fearsomely on the shining barrel of the lethal thing between them.

Anne caught the look of surprised and abashed terror in the girl's staring green eyes, and then all was black again. She was conscious that in another second or two the thunder would drown her voice, and she spoke quickly.

"Go back!" she commanded, her tone tense. "And say nothing. You see, dear, I can't let you elope with my own husband."

Chapter XI

Ballingsburg, which lies in the valley, sixteen miles to the east of Northborough, is the seat of the county and a city. Before its principal hotel—the Balling House—at something like half-past twelve on a summer night that was for years after to be recalled as the night of the big thunder storm, there alighted from a small automobile, without a top, and from which oozed water at every pore, a thoroughly soaked and very much bedraggled young man and young woman.

The young man, whose gait as he mounted the hotel steps, was noticeably unsteady, carried a suitcase that was water-stained and mud-spattered; and the young woman, whose long, saturated, black cloaklike wrap clung limply to her figure, bore in her hand a small traveling satchel. The brim of her black straw hat drooped so suddenly as to hide all of her face, excepting her mouth and chin.

With a gesture no more certain than his gait he indicated a chair in the entrance hall, and mumbled: "Wait there jus' a minute," as he himself turned into the office on the left. There, in a hand which gave every indication of being half palsied, he inscribed the names: "Mr. and Mrs. A. Ward, New York," on the hotel register, and demanded: "Room and bath. Bes' you got in house."

A colored boy who had been drowsing in a chair near the desk awoke, rubbing his eyes, at the sudden cry of "Front!" and, having first lurched for the suitcase, reached out for the key which the clerk held in extended hand.

As they were turning away an afterthought occurred to the guest and he flung back: "See't my car's put in garage!"

On reaching the entrance hall, now unhampered by his luggage, "Mr. A. Ward, New York," approached the seated "Mrs. A. Ward," and with an: "It's all right, m'dear," playfully tipped up her drooping hatbrim.

Half-muddled as he was from drink, he stood for a breath, uncertain, in a state of thoroughly dazed confusion, trying to reconcile the face of Anne Wharton on what he was confident was the body of Julia Brinton. And Anne, too, taken aback by this sudden and unexpected unmasking, was shaken by a cowering fear that here, at the last moment, the extraordinary bold and eccentric plan she had so hastily adopted was about to fall in ruin about her.

Up until now every circumstance had favored her, the storm, on which she could not have counted when making her decision, most of all. For it had not only hidden her from recognition by

sight, but it had made even tentative efforts at conversation during that frantic half-hour's drive in the teeth of its fury utterly impossible. And the fact of Woodward being in the condition he was, accepting the expected without so much as a shadow of suspicion, had proved a scarcely less potent ingredient.

She had known from the beginning, though, that eventual recognition was not only inescapable but absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of her purpose. But she had hoped to delay it a little further, choosing her own time in the first moments of their privacy, and thus securing the advantage of initiative, to be able to achieve the ultimate victory, without which this whole temerarious endeavor must react disastrously upon herself, without the accomplishment of any good whatever.

How, in the tiny space of- that breath, that heart-beat, of his apparent uncertainty, she found the power to command herself, was forever to be beyond her own comprehension. She spoke no word, but merely lifted to him her eyes, in which she managed to make manifest such a convincing expression of complete and ardent surrender as to penetrate with sweetest flattery to the very centre of his befuddled consciousness.

"Well, for God's sa—!" he mumbled, the final word cut short by a fatuous chuckle, while his broad rubicund face glowed with gratified vanity.

The colored bell boy had switched on the lights in the room to which he had conducted them, had thrown open the windows to the now cool and rain-washed night air, and was about to go, when Anne checked him.

"I don't suppose there are any writing materials in that desk over there, are there?"

The boy looked to see.

"I thought not," she said. "There never are. I wish you'd fetch some, at once."

When he was at the door again it was Woodward who detained him. "Bar closed?" he asked.

"Yessir!"

"Then bring some ice water." And when he had gone, her elated companion said to Anne: "Sorry can't get champagne t' celebrate this glorious 'casion. But got some good Scotch in suitcase." And, dropping his rain-soaked cap to the floor, he suddenly took her, wet-through as they both were, into his arms.

She closed her eyes, yet smiled, as she yielded her lips to his fetid kisses.

"God!" he exclaimed with fervent gratification as he released her. "At last! Knew, though, it'd come to this some time."

"And—and you're not sorry? Not disappointed?"

"Do I look it?"

"No. I can't say you do. But—still—"

"Still what?"

"She's younger, you know, and—and very lovely."

"Hell!" he said. It was a growl of repudiation. "You can't compare her—that kid—with yourself. You know you can't."

She was unbuttoning her wrap.

"Isn't it only," she went on, "that I'm welcome because you really had given up hope? Because you regarded me as unattainable?"

"I should say not." He had stripped himself of his grey alpaca dustcoat, and was now removing the thin blue serge that he had worn underneath it. She saw that his striped silk shirt was stained where the rain had soaked through the outer garments carrying the dye with it.

Then, apparently, his vanity all at once required reassurance. "But, say!" he questioned, "Why did you do this?"

"Need you ask? Isn't it plain, Alan?"

"You mean you were jealous of her?"

"Of course. I have been from the first. This afternoon I knew she had gone to meet you, and I followed. I heard everything. And I—I couldn't let her steal my happiness."

"You might have had it long ago.

You had first call. I don't just see why—"

"It wasn't until I saw you hold her in your arms—until I saw you kiss her, there in the summer house, that I realized what you meant to me. What I was about to miss, maybe forever."

Thus encouraged, he was about to embrace her again, but a sharp rap on the door deterred him. It was the colored boy with the stationery and the ice water. When the boy had departed finally the moment had passed. The embrace could wait. There was something he craved even more. He lifted his suitcase to a chair and, having unstrapped it, took out a bottle of Scotch whiskey and busied himself with the mixing of two rather stiff highballs.

Anne, meanwhile, had been arranging on the desk-pad a sheet of paper and an envelope, and taking the stopper from the small ink bottle. In her hand she held a penholder with a new pen.

"What's the idea?" he asked, as he crossed to her, a glass in each hand. "What's all the hurry? Why not take off your hat and coat an' make yourself at home?"

"Because," she answered, "there's something to be done first. Something that I want you to do, dear."

"Me?" and he laughed. "What? Give you my autograph?"

"No," she rejoined, smiling. "I want you to write to Julia Brinton."

"Oh, come!" he demurred. "What for?" And then, not waiting for an answer, he pressed the highball upon her, with: "Drink that, and behave."

She took the glass in her left hand, still holding the pen in her right. "I don't really want it," she told him. "But if I drink it, for you, to our happiness, you'll do as I ask, darling, won't you?"

"'S'nothing I wouldn't do for you, sweetheart," he agreed.

Then they touched glasses and drank.

"That's funny," he said when he had drained his. "Told that child only yesterday you were jealous of her. See, how I knew all the time."

"Of course I was. That's why before I am quite yours I want to make sure that you're done with her forever."

"Oh, I see. Well, that's easy."

"But don't hurt her more than you can help. I insist on that, Alan. May I dictate the letter? I'd like to."

She gave him the pen and took his glass from him, placing it beside her own on the upper ledge of the desk.

"Sure thing," he agreed, as he sat down. "Go as far as you like." And as slowly she furnished the words he spread them with still tremulous, uncertain hand over the sheet of hotel letter paper before him.

When it was finished they read it over together as she leant above him:

MY DEAR JULIA: In the end I couldn't. I'm not a saint by any means, but you are too fine a girl to have your life ruined by the deception of such a scoundrel as I planned to be. I have never really loved you. It was only the baser in me that craved you. I couldn't marry you, because I already have a wife. Forgive me, because I'm not worthy of remembrance.

Sincerely,
ALAN WOODWARD.

She took it up, then, and began folding it, as she said: "Now, address the envelope, that's a good fellow."

In blotting it he smudged the ink, but she did not ask him to address another. She inserted the letter and stuck down the flap.

"Now," she said, moving towards the door, "I'm going to post it."

But he got to his feet with a celerity of which she hardly believed him capable, blocking her way.

"You are not!" he cried roughly. "Not by a damn sight. I'll ring for the boy if it's so important. You stay here, milady! And don't forget it."

"But why not?" she asked in a voice disarmingly calm and yet surprised. "What harm is there in my going downstairs to drop it in the box? I want to be satisfied that it is surely sent. I'll be back in half a minute."

"You'll not go," he repeated. "Very

clever game, but not clever enough. See it all now. Might have known you were keeping hat and cloak on for some reason." He glanced quickly about the room. "Of course! That proves it. Even left your satchel downstairs. Hid it, I suppose. Give me that letter!" As he spoke he was backing towards the door, and she felt that he was about to lock it.

She had thrust the letter into her pocket at his first words. Now, her hand refollowed it, as she said:

"Are you crazy? My satchel's in the closet. Look and see. And, of course, you may have the letter, if you—Why on earth should I steal away from you? Didn't I come with you unbidden? Haven't I proved to you that I love you? That I want you? Oh, Alan, how terribly cruel you are!"

For just a second he faltered as she drew nearer, fumbling apparently for the letter. Before he recovered himself she had covered him with her revolver.

Her heart pounded stiflingly, knowing the bluff she was making and her imminent peril of having it called. For not a single chamber of the revolver was loaded. Yet outwardly she was marvelously composed, holding him with a fixed gaze which was compounded of unwavering courage and determination.

Swiftly and surely, with one combined motion, she possessed herself of the door-key and turned the knob. There was an instant then in which it seemed to her that, after all, she was about to fail. His face had purpled; his eyes were shot with the blood and fire of a wild, reckless rage. In that instant she saw herself pounced upon, thrown back, overpowered, imprisoned. And, impelled by something more electric than thought, her wrist flexed, snapped back, and the weapon she had been pointing, propelled as by a steel spring, leaped the short space between them, to strike the enemy squarely in the face.

Another second, and with the door locked behind her, she was flying down the single flight of stairs. From beneath the chair she had sat on in the hall she recovered her satchel. The door to the porch stood open. Through it, spurred now not so much by fear of pursuit as by a passionate elation, she hastened out into the balmy, star-lit night.

Chapter XII

Northborough, which was apparently in the vortex of the thunder storm, had suffered from its might. Three houses had been struck by lightning and more or less damaged and a barn had been burned to the ground. One of the houses was that of David Brinton. Its kitchen chimney had been demolished and a great gaping hole torn through kitchen roof and floor. And the fact that one of the inmates—the boarder—had slept soundly through the ear-spitting violence of this electrical bombing was regarded by both David and Alma as amazing. From David's viewpoint, it was amazingly gratifying, for he saw in it but an added evidence of perfectly regained nervous poise. But to his sister-in-law, still jealous and suspicious, it was amazingly incredible. For, apart from the tumult of the storm and that one supreme rending crash, there had been prolonged talking in the upper hall just outside Julia's door, which was within a yard or two of Mrs. Wharton's. And then, too, there had been Julia's screaming. For the poor child had been wildly hysterical because of the storm.

So affected, indeed, was she that she had not come down to breakfast, and her father, who had gone up to see her, reported her feverish, with an aching head, and had telephoned for Dr. Morly.

Mrs. Wharton, unusually silent throughout the meal and self-absorbed, had asked solicitously if there was anything she could do, but as Alma carefully noted, had not this time volunteered to seek the child unbidden.

At dinner, from which Julia was again absent, Anne, having in a measure recovered her self-command, was

less distrait. She began to talk at once, speaking of the apparent interest of the whole village in the damaged kitchen and the wrecked chimney, if she might judge from the number of visitors she had noticed about the grounds. But it struck her that both Mr. Brinton and Miss Fielder were strangely unresponsive. It had become their turn for the indulgence of a thoughtful taciturnity; and her first thought was that Julia was really, and perhaps seriously ill. But in answer to her enquiry her host said:

"Dr. Morly promises us she'll be herself again in a few days. Just nervous shock and disturbed digestion. It's nothing to worry over."

Robbed of this explanation, Anne was quick to assume another. Was it possible, she asked herself, that the girl, feverish, a little delirious, perhaps, had let fall some hint of her secret, and that, persistently questioned, she had made a clean breast of the unfortunate romance and, in her bitterness, involved in it her would-be benefactress?

Anne had little doubt that Julia had recognized her in that lightning flare at the gate, when she had claimed Alan Woodward as a husband and had sent her back to the house and hysterics at the point of a revolver. She had lied, of course, for the very best possible purpose. But how could Julia, or those in whom she confided, know that? Nor, how, indeed, could she, herself, ever convince them?

Tortured by this possibility, for she was very jealous of the confidence shown her by Brinton in the acceptation of her tragic story, her appetite fled her, and in a little while she excused herself and left the table. As she came to Julia's door she was half-tempted to enter, uninvited. But decided at once that, all things considered, she could gain nothing by it. She went into her own room and sat down to think. Very shortly, though, the four walls became oppressive. The very house, itself—the house now of enemies, she felt—was unbearable. She rose, put on her hat, took up a book as usual, and her sunshade, and went hurriedly out.

The afternoon after the storm of the night was glorious. The sun shone brightly from a sky almost wholly cloudless, and the air, though balmy, had a snap in it. Yesterday it had been dead, smothering. Today it was alive. Her spirits rose in response to it, and the wood, which she soon entered, calmed and soothed her; taking away half her depression and awakening a fresh optimism.

David Brinton, watching from his study window, had seen her go out, and, noting the book, had divined her objective. To him, too, the walls of the room, and the house of which those walls were a part, had grown oppressive. Doubt, questioning, suspicion, tittle-tattle, had stolen away the peace that he loved. He was wrapped about, it seemed to him, in a mesh of misunderstanding and cross-purposes.

He waited just a little while, and went out. And, at a distance, he followed his boarder.

Between breakfast and dinner, that day, he had heard enough to shake the faith of the most wilfully prejudiced. For the visitors of which Mrs. Wharton had spoken were not all drawn by so innocuous an attraction as simple curiosity to witness the damage wrought by the lightning. More than one of them—four, at least—had been impelled by a passion to divulge and to enquire, not about the lightning, but concerning a matter of far more intriguing interest. All four of them had seen the Brinton guest, palpably bedraggled and apparently worn and weary, returning at dawn with a small traveling satchel in hand, and evidently from a journey. Three of them, whose knowledge had been gained merely from witnessing her pass their homes, he might have satisfied with some harmless invention, had it not been that they'd probably already spoken to Alma, or would, he knew, subsequently apply to her for confirmation. But the fourth, who was no less already interested a person than old Simon Scudder,

had not only seen her, but talked with her.

Called to Ballingsburg by the illness of a married granddaughter, the day before, he had been to the necessity of taking the early train back to Northborough in order to keep an engagement with a prospective purchaser for some of his farm lands. And Mrs. Wharton had approached him, with an enquiry as to trains, on the Ballingsburg station platform, the ticket office not being open at that hour.

He had been too much of a gentleman, he explained to David, to question her, but there was no denying that she had aroused his curiosity, and he asked his old friend flatly what she was doing there. To which Brinton had non-committally replied that he supposed she had a perfectly good reason, such as Simon had, but that he was not in her confidence. Whereupon the old man had taken from his pocket a newspaper—a late "extra" issued by the Ballingsburg *Daily News*—and called his attention to certain startling headlines. These and the article beneath them David had indignantly repudiated at once as having any possible connection with Mrs. Wharton.

The implication angered him. But, later, having walked down to the village with Scudder in order to get his mail, he had found in his box a letter for Julia—the address in a masculine hand, somewhat smudged—bearing the Ballingsburg postmark. And the fact that the envelope bore, too, the imprint of the Balling house, mentioned in the newspaper story, seemed to link it in some perplexing sinister fashion with the other disclosures. And, all at once, the possibility of his daughter's indisposition—such an unusual thing for her—being even remotely connected with the affair filled him with an intense sense of uneasiness, if not, indeed, with alarm. Had her condition not been what it was, he would have taken the letter to her immediately and demanded to see the enclosure. As it was, he had put it in his pocket, where it still remained.

Anne, relieved in a measure and in complete ignorance of all that had been happening, was rarely more surprised than she was by the abrupt appearance of her host. Seated on her favorite mossy hummock at the foot of her great tree, she had been deep in reverie, believing her solitude, under the circumstances, more than ever unlikely to be invaded. Nor was there ever an occasion when David Brinton's coming could have been less welcome. She was oppressed and made ill-at-ease by an accusing consciousness of deception; and the fact that she regarded it as obligatory did not serve to lighten it.

She saw at once that he was disturbed, like herself; deeply concerned, serious, unhappy. And directly her heart went out to him. Again she was prone to attribute this to Julia's malaise. But his very first words, as he sat down beside her, proved her mistake.

"I've been wondering, my dear lady," he said, not looking at her, "whether you'd mind another real heart-to-heart talk."

Her first impulse was to escape. She was in no mood for cross-questioning, and certainly not for confession. All day she had been, up to the last ten minutes or so, at high nervous tension; and she felt that to put on exhibition all that she longed only to hide and forget would strain those already taut nerves to breaking. If only he had given her time! Still, it was evident that he had learned a little, and it was only natural that he should be impatient to have his doubts settled. And the thought that he was not a man to accept hearsay—the very fact that he had evidently come to her, confident of gaining the truth—swayed her towards yielding. Noting her hesitation he had gone on:

"I think you know how much I believe in you, and how intolerant I am of small-town gossip. But there's something now that touches me—or threatens to—very closely, and I'm hoping that you may and will dissipate it."

She saw then that the ordeal was not to be eluded, and she breathed in her soul a little prayer for strength.

"I'm afraid," she began in a low voice, and a tone that conveyed contrition, "that I've sacrificed my right to be believed."

She paused, hoping for his protest; for his denial. But he was silent, and she added: "I intentionally let you assume something that was not the truth."

Strangely enough he was caught by this back to that first real interview in which she had so vividly, yet with such broad, sweeping strokes, pictured for him her marital tragedy. She had not, he recalled, actually claimed to be guiltless; but he had inferred it, as she evidently meant him to do. And when, now, she said: "I didn't sleep through the storm last night. I was not in my room from the first to the last of it," he took it as, not her original admission, but as an added instance of her failure in complete candour.

But it was the more immediate matter that he had come there to speak of, and so, ignoring the other, he said to her:

"I am told you were in Ballingsburg. Is that true?"

"Yes," she answered, nodding her head. "I had to go. And I wanted to keep it a secret. My—my errand I can't—I'm so sorry, Mr. Brinton, but I can't tell that even to you."

"It would be safe with me," he suggested, still not looking at her.

"I know that. I'm sure of it. But —Please don't ask me to explain."

"I must ask you one question, Mrs. Wharton. And I've a right to have it answered. Is the reason you can't tell me because it involves my daughter, Julia?"

And Anne, embarrassed, fixed on the horns of this unlooked-for dilemma, sat staring at the boulder across the road, than which she was no less dumb.

Brinton's hand was digging into his coat-pocket. He felt that his vision was clearing in a measure, and that the letter his fingers touched might speed it. When he had drawn it forth and was holding it out to her, exposing the superscription, the hotel imprint and the postmark, he said:

"Possibly you know something of this."

She couldn't see that it remained unopened, and believed that he had already read the words of her own dictation. She had a feeling of being engulfed, and doubted the efficacy of even the truth to save her. It might be worth trying. It was a duty to herself, she supposed, to try it; and a duty to him who had trusted her. But all at once, when about to speak, she discovered that she was oddly bereft of words.

And then she heard Brinton going on:

"I understand that something sensational occurred at the Balling House, last night. A guest lost his life there."

At the last words a tremor shook her from head to foot, as though the engulfing waters had chilled her, in that instant, to the marrow. She started, sitting straight, her throat constricted, which caused her to gasp audibly for breath. And David, watching her, added:

"A young man named Woodward. Alan Woodward." Nor, yet satisfied, he continued: "A New York newspaper man who, until yesterday, had been at Parmalee's for the fishing."

He saw her quick pallor, noted the flicker of her eyelids, and his arms were there to receive her as she crumpled, slipping from her mossy hummock and drooping inertly towards him.

Chapter XIII

Anne Wharton was not the sort of woman that faints at the drop of a hat. For more than twenty-four hours she had been under an almost continuous and most unusual nervous strain. She had taken at least one enormous risk. Once already in her life she had been accused of murder. Last night, in self-defence, but with no witnesses,

she had attacked another man; fleeing without waiting to learn how greatly or how little he had been hurt. And now, at a moment when she had no reason to expect any tidings one way or the other, she had been told that he was dead.

To David Brinton this culmination of his probing was in more ways than one a painfully harrowing experience. In the brief space that she had been a member of his household he had come to regard her with an ever-growing respect and admiration. He believed her, as he had again and again phrased it to himself, to be "a woman who has suffered and is good, and so bears the stamp celestial." And even now, in spite of all that this emotional collapse so plainly and horridly indicated; in spite of the confession of it,—as convincing in its emphasis of silence as spoken words, if not indeed more so—he was for her all pity, which is akin to love, and charity, which is love itself; and only of himself reproachful.

Resilient even beyond his hopes, she came back presently, to find herself lying flat on the sward, with Brinton bending over her and bathing her face and temples with a handkerchief which he had wet in the brook. And seeing then only kindliness, with possibly a little of something more, in his steel-grey eyes, she permitted herself a faintly eager longing for, if not hope of, reassurance.

It may have been that he divined this. He had a way of putting himself, as it were, into another's skin, and looking at the world and events through their eyes. For when, at length, she sat up and smiled, he said:

"I should have known better than to give you that news as I did. For I judged he might be the friend who called on you day before yesterday. It seems he fell out of a window."

What else he had read in that newspaper account he wouldn't have told her then for worlds. It's a question whether he would ever have told her, had it not been that, almost immediately, she began telling him the whole story and continued it to the very last word. For the relief of knowing that the flung revolver had inflicted no fatal injury reacted so stimulatingly, physically as well as morally, that weariness dropped from her and she was inspired to a succinct and expressive mental unburdening. Nor was she deterred now by any necessity of keeping faith with Julia, seeing that she still believed the letter shown her had been opened and read, and that her hearer was already in possession of at least the more salient facts of the girl's infatuation.

She began with her own first meeting with Alan Woodward in the prison at Nashville, where he had come to interview her. She spoke of his brilliancy as a correspondent and especially of his kindness to her at that time, by giving her the first sympathetically favorable news story that had appeared. She had later to learn that he was a dipsomaniac. Charming when sober, he was a fiend when drunk. Following the trial he had made violent love to her, and fearing openly to offend him, she had, while not seeming to resent his ardor, stolen away North, leaving him no address. In New York, quite by accident, she learned that he was married, though he had posed to her as a bachelor. It was as much through fear of meeting him again, as for any other reason, that she had sought isolation for the present summer.

"Oh, why was it," she cried with drawn brow and earnest eye, "that he, too, should have drifted here, of all places in the world?"

But David hazarded no answer. Later he quoted Watts to himself concerning the mystery of Divine performance, and argued that it was for the salvation of his daughter and the revelation and establishment of all that was best in his boarder's character.

The part of her narrative that had to do with Julia's meeting with Woodward she glozed over, and of that bit of a letter found near the summer house she said nothing at all. If she might only be sure that it meant less than it signified! But while all she knew of

the girl argued in favor of her hope and desire, Alan Woodward's course at Ballingsburg, while believing it was Julia, and not she, who was his companion, bore too strongly against it to be ignored. And this, too, she felt, could hardly have escaped the father, had she not, in her recital, made it appear that discovery of her deception came in the car before the hotel was reached.

Herself she spared in no way. And Brinton, with the preknowledge of the newspaper account, which had been reasonably full, realized it. He was able, thus enlightened, to arrive at what seemed to him the only plausible theory of the man's death. Enraged over being tricked, and his mind muddled by drink, he had evidently sought by means of the window to reach the ground outside the hotel and so head off his fleeing deceiver and assailant, and had either miscalculated the drop, or, owing to his condition, had overestimated his agility.

Put thus in possession of all the facts, more confident than ever though he was of the sterling worth of this unfortunate woman's character — and this, too, in spite of that assumption of her admission of not entire freedom from guilt in the Nashville case—and filled with so fervid a gratitude for her service to Julia that no words could express it, he was nevertheless aghast concerning the consequences which, as he viewed the situation, appeared to be unescapable. The death of Alan Woodward under such sensational circumstances made it incumbent upon the law to find and produce, at least as a witness, the woman whom, but fifteen or twenty minutes before it occurred, he had registered under an assumed name as his wife: the woman who had so mysteriously disappeared, presumably at the very moment of the tragedy.

Had she been able to return to Northborough unseen and unrecognized, all might have been well. But, rather than to arouse question at that hour by applying at a garage for an automobile, she had for three hours walked the town's silent streets, sitting now and then on doorsteps to rest, and had gone finally to the railroad station, more than half an hour before train time, where she had spoken to and been recognized by a Northborough man, and that Simon Scudder, of all persons in the world.

No, there was no hope. Her identification and apprehension were inevitable.

It was nearly supper time when they reached home, coming in by the back way as they had on that other day of confession, and at the kitchen door Alma Fielder stood waiting.

"Mrs. Wharton," she said icily, speaking through lips tightly-drawn against her teeth, yet with an accent of sardonic satisfaction, "there's a man on the veranda to see you. He's been waiting two hours and more."

Brinton started to follow her, but Alma caught at his sleeve.

"You wait here," she whispered. "It's an officer from Ballingsburg. He's got a warrant for her arrest."

But David went just the same.

Chapter XIV

It was not until three months had gone by that Brinton was fully able to reach a clear perspective. In all the intervening weeks there had been so much shifting of values; so many changes of color; such constant interposition of lights and shadows; that he had found it impossible to achieve a broad yet just perception of the rather complex projection.

Many times he had gone over it all, bit by bit, though picking the bits at random. But on this early October afternoon he had begun at the beginning, with that first letter in answer to the advertisement, and his interpretation of it. And he saw now how wonderfully right he had been, even beyond what at the time he had been willing to admit. For the signification of the looped and tied *o* and *a* had been borne out eventually to a remarkable degree. Secretiveness *had* been carried to the

extreme. To gain a desired end, if Mrs. Wharton had not resorted to actual falsehood under oath, she had certainly confined herself to much less than the "whole truth." Yet it was no matter for reprobation. On the contrary, since the omission harmed no one and spared the blameless, he had to regard it as commendable. Moreover, it demonstrated in itself the accuracy of other points in his graphological reading: her broadmindedness, her fine sense of justice, and her infinite tact.

How she had astonished him that day when the officer who had been waiting more than two hours for her told her that she was wanted at Ballingsburg and must go back with him at once in his car! David had feared another collapse. But she had been composure itself. She had gone a little pale, it is true. Any woman would. The majority would probably have become hysterical. But Anne Wharton had said simply:

"If I'm likely to be detained there over night I'd probably best get my satchel."

And David, himself, had said: "Can I get what you want? I'm going with you, you know."

It had developed then that she was not really under arrest. There was no charge against her. But she was wanted as a material witness at the inquest which was to be held that evening. Only once, though, and that for not over two minutes, was he given opportunity to speak to her in private, and then it was she that did most of the speaking. All the way from Northborough he had been tortured by the thought of what portended: the exposure which must strip from her her last shred of character and in all probability involve his daughter, as well—his motherless baby to whom he was so singly and devotedly attached, and of whom he had never before had reason to be otherwise than proud. And in that brief moment of privacy following their arrival he was made aware that his distress had been more evident to his companion than he, imagining her so deeply self-engrossed, had any reason to suspect.

He recalled now, after these months, the eager and sustaining grip of her hand, chilled though it was by nerves at tension, as she said, looking up at him with the bravest smile he had ever seen: "Oh, don't! Please don't worry! There's no reason. Just trust me. I swear to you I won't fail you."

And she hadn't. He had wanted to use what little influence he had with one of the county officials, who was an old friend, but she had begged him not to. It would only argue weakness, she held. Better to go through with it unaided. He must remember that she had had more personal experience with the law than had he.

Listening to her testimony, so convincingly given, he was amazed at his having entertained so hideous an anxiety. She had known the deceased, she said, for two years and more. He had been of service to her in getting articles to her interest in the newspaper with which he was connected. A fortnight ago she had written him at Parmalee's to come to see her. He had come on the morning of the day preceding his accident. But they had been interrupted. Last evening he had stopped at the gate to tell her that he was going away, and she had insisted on getting in his car with him in order to finish their conversation. They had become interested and he had missed his train at the Junction. They had driven about until midnight when the storm overtook them, and they had made for Ballingsburg and the Ballings House for shelter. As there was a letter in connection with the matter which she wished to dictate, he had proposed getting a room there for her, as it was too late for her to go back to Northborough. He intended, himself, to take the train for Boston which passed through Ballingsburg at about one o'clock. Not until this evening, here in the coroner's court, had she been aware that he had registered in the way he had. But he had been drinking, she knew that, and after the letter had been

dictated, he had become so grossly ardent that he had frightened her. When he attempted to restrain her at the point of a revolver from leaving the room, and was about to lock the door, he stumbled, half lost his balance, and dropped his weapon. In that instant she fled, pausing an instant only, to make him a prisoner.

There had been some little cross-examination, but it touched nothing vital. The elderly district attorney had asked concerning the subject of the conversation and the dictated letter, and her reply had been: "A private business matter." He had not pressed the enquiry further. He had asked also concerning a bruise and abrasion on Woodward's brow: whether she knew how he had got it. She answered that she had not seen it, and it was taken for granted that it had been inflicted in his fall.

Brinton saw now, in this fresh review of her evidence, that she had more than evaded, more than equivocated. She had invented and boldly misrepresented the facts. She had lied. She had perjured herself. Perjured herself like a lady—like the true woman she was: the true woman he had always found her.

And there came back to him, then, that other question: Had she perjured herself in the same way at Nashville to save herself? Had she, or had she not, poisoned her brute of a husband? And believing from what he had understood her to say that last afternoon in the solitude of the wood road that she had, he was ready to justify in that as he had already justified in this other.

Juries of men, apparently, were always ready to absolve her. The Ballingsburg jury had followed in the footsteps of the Tennessee jury, and had decreed that Alan Woodward came to his death by accidentally falling from a window. But women are less easily swayed, or, to use their own phrasing: "less easily imposed upon." And Alma Fielder disagreed with the Ballingsburg jury. In the beginning she had held that Mrs. Wharton was mysterious. Now she was convinced that Mrs. Wharton was wicked. She had heard more than enough in the village, she declared, to warrant her. And it had come at length to that question which, at the beginning of August, she had put to her brother-in-law:

"Which do you need most, that woman or me? For either she goes or I do."

David had refused a direct answer. He needed them both, he said. Julia's illness, growing out of what was thought at first to be but a temporary indisposition, had been prolonged. And Anne Wharton had nursed her like an angel, and at this time was still nursing her. It was unthinkable that he could send the boarder away. And not only for this reason, which he could tell Alma, but even more so for those other reasons which he could not. So Miss Fielder, leaving not so much as a rag behind her, deserted him in the hour of his necessity, and migrated to Block Island, where her brother's family were occupying a cottage for the summer.

Now, Julia, fully restored to health, her romantic experience, which had ended so tragically, no more than one of the horrid dreams of her delirium, had gone back to school, and Mrs. Wharton, having by gradual initiation slipped into Alma's deserted place in the domestic machinery, had moved into the smaller, warmer room over the kitchen and made ready to stop through the winter rather than leave this lone man unlooked after. And in spite of her good will she had only brought down upon herself and him a fresh avalanche of village opprobrium.

Something that Simon Scudder had said gave Brinton the first hint of it, and to Anne it was made abruptly apparent by the departure of the maid, Emily, who observed in going that she didn't want to question "but what everything was right and proper, but people will talk, you know, Miss Wharton," and as she'd always been a good girl and a churchgoer, it was better, she guessed, to leave.

This, too, had a part in David Brin-

ton's general retrospective survey that October afternoon. In that brief period of pallor which precedes the dusk, seated at his study table, he had just seen the boarder pass in along the leaf-strewn flagged walk, and involuntarily his fingers released the pen he had been unconsciously holding through his reverie, and he slid back in his chair to a posture of idle relaxation.

"The boarder!" Everyone called her that. And yet it was preposterous. She was no more a boarder now than Alma had been. He had hardly realized it, but she was his housekeeper. He was dependent on her. For a week now, since Emily's going, she had been doing everything. She had tried to get another servant, but had so far been unsuccessful. So that all the housework had been added to her other voluntarily undertaken duties. He couldn't pay her. He knew that. She was not the sort to accept money. Why, now he came to think of it, she must be using what she had formerly given to Alma to help keep the place going. That mustn't go on, of course. He hardly knew what to do. It was a very delicate situation and it made the other—that of her anomalous position which had set the village talking—doubly embarrassing.

There came to him a suggestion of closing the house and going to the city. But he couldn't work there. He never had been able to work with the turmoil of the metropolis about him. And at the thought of parting from her—ending this association, which had become so much of late to him—a pain, poignant as that of a pricked nerve, shot through his heart.

His train of thought took a new turn. Wrapped in the silence of the old house of which he seemed so inextricably a part his meditation continued, while the pale twilight deepened to dusk, and the dusk merged into dark.

Anne, bringing in his lamp, found him sitting with closed eyes. She fancied he was asleep, and having put the lamp down was about to go out softly when, suddenly, he sat up and wheeled about in his revolving chair.

"Do you mind," he asked, "waiting just a moment? I've been thinking, and I find I owe you an apology."

She smiled, and it occurred to him that to be bereft of her smiles would be like being bereft of the sunlight.

"Owe me an apology?" she questioned. "I don't see what for."

"For that," he said, pointing to the lamp. "And a hundred things like it. For calmly accepting all this service of yours—this drudgery and giving only thanks in return. I can't understand myself. It's been unpardonable. And —and the animadversion as well," he added.

A hurt look came into her deeply blue eyes.

"Oh, Mr. Brinton!" she came back. "If you only knew what it has meant to me! This—this exercise of service. To be of some use again; to live, really. And to be appreciated."

He rose and stood leaning against his desk. It was very hard for him to say what he was going to, but he had made up his mind and it must be gone through with.

"I—I rather expected that," he told her. "I knew pretty well how you'd try to shift the obligation to yourself. But, you must see, my dear lady, that I can't, with self-respect, accept it no matter how willing you are to give. And so, as there appears no other practicable way out, I've determined to close the house for the winter and find a home elsewhere."

For what happened then he was unprepared. He had come to regard her of late as possessed of such indomitable courage and such superb fortitude that he had pictured her accepting his decision with far more calm equanimity than he had been capable of in announcing it. But the hurt look had suddenly become one of acute mental suffering, and before he quite realized what this foreboded, Anne Wharton had crumpled onto the sofa behind her, and, covering her face with her hands, had given way to a violence of tears.

Following this, when she had regained sufficient composure to trust her

voice and found him sitting, much distressed beside her, she had chosen to confound him by shifting the blame, as she had the obligation, from his shoulders to her own. It was her coming that had been responsible for all his present trouble, ending now in the disruption of his home. She had tried to make what amends she could, but had succeeded only in making bad worse.

Brinton, cheered more than he would admit even to himself by this contention, for he saw in it the possibility of a less rigorous adjustment of his difficulty, nevertheless combatted it; finally suggested that Mrs. Wharton would probably be far happier with kinsfolk and friends in urban surroundings, where there was more opportunity for diversion and less ignorant censoriousness.

"I can't have you sacrifice yourself just for me," he concluded. "I refuse to be so ungratefully selfish."

But, with that, she turned to him, laying a pleading hand on his arm, and lifting earnestly beseeching eyes to his.

"Listen," she begged. "Oh, please listen and believe me! I haven't any near kin in the world. I haven't a single old friend that didn't turn on me in my trouble. Everyone of them believed, in spite of the verdict, that I killed Jonas Winchester. There were a few who said I was justified, that they didn't blame me, but that nothing could convince that I didn't give him the poison. Do you think that I could ever again take the hand of anyone who, knowing all the facts, as I myself had sworn to them—I had admitted that I had prayed that he might die; had admitted, too, that I had forgotten that once to lock up the arsenic—could still think me capable of that awful crime? Oh, God no!"

She paused just an instant, her hand unmoving from his arm, her gaze still holding his, and went on: "Is it any wonder I want to stay here with you, who, knowing far less of me, never until this minute knowing exactly what happened, had faith in me? Is it any wonder that I love—"

The suddenness of his embrace cut her question unfinished.

"How much, my dear? How much?" he asked, his utterance choked by the swelling tide of emotion precipitately loosed. "Enough to marry me, and silence these evil tongues?"

"More, more than that," she told him. "Enough to worship you like an idol that can give nothing in return."

Not until after they were husband and wife did she make to him her final confession. He was teasing her for having told him that she loved him before he had had a chance to tell her that he loved her.

"But I didn't," she denied. "You only thought I was going to. You didn't let me finish. What I had begun to say was: 'Is it any wonder that I love to do for you?' "

THE END

AFTER five cocktails, a man tells what he knows; a woman, what she wishes.

A BAD NIGHT

By Richard Fisguill

MR. BUFORD's formula was to start out on his left side, lay there till his left arm felt numb, and then very carefully turn to the right side, pausing for just an instant on his back to stretch his legs, clasp his hands and murmur four lines he had learned from an old negro woman when he was a child.

He had always gone to sleep that way.

Sometimes the ritual had to be repeated. If he were in physical pain, for instance, or suffering mental anguish. But in all his life he couldn't recall one single time that sleep had absolutely refused to lie with him.

That is, not before tonight.

So Mr. Buford wondered what was the matter. He had benumbed his left arm a dozen or more times, turned over through his colored prayer to the regulation right side, and yet there he was with his eyes propped wide open. Then all sorts of uncomfortable sensations were pecking at him on the inside, gnawing, boring, like things trying to make their way out. He was an old man.

Lifting up on his elbow he looked over at his wife, who lay perfectly still in the other twin bed. She was a young woman.

He could just make out her features.

At first he thought her eyes were shut. But leaning closer, he peered. He saw her heaviest eyelid come down, go up and then stay.

"What are you thinking about?" And he dropped back wearily on his bed.

"Nothing."

"If you weren't thinking about anything you'd either go to sleep or get restless. Look at me. Here I've been rolling and tossing—"

"It's the moon. I told you those big casement windows would keep us awake."

"Hm."

"You know what I mean. If we had just ordinary windows we could push up the top sash, pull the shades down, something. But with all your big glass door windows wide open— The moon, the bugs, all those stars. Then bats. There are two of them out there. Great big bats. And when bats get in a woman's hair they have to be cut out. That's what Marie says. And she's going to leave next month."

"But I'll get up and shut the windows—"

"Don't. We'd smother. It's still enough up here on the top of this mountain without your making things still deader. I told you—"

"But this evening what d'you call off your reception for? God knows *I* don't want you to keep still and smother."

"Yes, you do."

"Now, Vangy!"

"But you knew when you built this old house up here—"

"No, I didn't. I thought we were going to be happy. I thought people had more sense. That down here at least folks were like what they used to be when I was a boy. That they weren't like New York. But they're worse. They are, really. Instead of their being grateful to me for dumping a million dollars among them— Instead of their—"

"Worshipping us."

"Us?"

"Well, you then." And her tone sounded spiteful. "Instead of their worshipping you."

"I never asked but one person in all this world to worship me."

"Let's go to sleep."

"No, I don't want them to worship me. But after I pay off the mortgages on their churches, help all their banks out, found a chair at their university, and wring the hand of every Tom, Dick and Harry that comes up here, invite them to dinner, show them everything, pictures, statuary, incunabula, give them an idea of what civilization means, and—"

"Awe them."

"Well, oughtn't they to be awed? They don't know anything, haven't seen anything, haven't done anything. And never will. They just sit around and talk. They've stopped chewing tobacco, but their talk's worse. And of all the empty pretension! They make fun of me to my face. I'm not anything. I'm a mere rich man. Of course I have pretty things. Masterpieces. Of course my wife's young and pretty. Of course—" A gulp finally bored its way out of Mr. Buford.

"Of course, what? Speak it out. Then maybe you'll go to sleep."

"Speak what out?"

"Oh, I don't know. That, of course, your pretty young wife's wretched all the time and thinking about handsome young fellows who haven't seen anything, don't know anything, and never will do anything."

"Evangeline!"

"But that's what you mean. Why not say it! Then maybe you'll go to sleep."

"But I don't mean that."

"Then how'll this do: That of course because a young fellow is good-looking he thinks he ought to be matched off with your pretty young wife. Like that Apollo down there in the hall with the Venus which looks so much like me. Will that make you any easier? You feel like going to sleep now?"

"Vangy, I hope you'll never get to be an old woman. Or if you do, I hope you'll just forget. It would bother me to think you were suffering after you'd got to be old."

"But it doesn't matter now while I'm young, does it, dear?"

"Let's go to sleep."

"No," she objected. "There's one more thing. You can't go to sleep until you speak it all out. I know you. You're like a child. Old people always are. You have to whimper everything out with your head on my knees. I have to pat your head. Then you smile and go to sleep. So whimper a little about that handsome young professor of astronomy with violet eyes. And then we'll both go to sleep. I'm your wife. It's my business to hear you whine. So whimper a little, dear. Then I'll pat you on the head. And we'll both go to sleep."

"You don't care for that fellow, do you, Vangy?"

"I knew that was what you wanted to get at. Of course I don't care for him. I'm *your* wife, not his. You don't expect me to be the wife of two men at the same time, do you? Funny! Why don't you jealous husbands reflect once and a while that the very minute you suspect your wives you are pointing them out the way? We women are a stupid lot, at least those of us who spend our lives dolling up. And nine cases out of ten we wouldn't have sense enough to dream even of doing things if we weren't suspected of having already done them. There now! So I had something to say, too. I have been wanting to tell you that for a good long time. It'll help *me* to go to sleep. So good night, dear. We're both ready now, aren't we? We're even."

"Good night, Vangy."

Meanwhile a moon—an imperfect thing that looked mashed in—got up into the valley high enough to hang the bedroom with puzzling tapestry. It was an unreasonable hour on an unreasonable planet that whirled through unreasonable space. And a dog at the foot of the mountain, pulled back on

his haunches by ropes that moved a tide, howled like a wolf at that mashed-in moon, whined like an old man, whimpered like a child, spoke out for all that could not sleep.

And Mr. Buford got up.

He leaned over Evangeline. She was asleep now. She fit perfectly into all that puzzling tapestry which wavered about the room. She was a pretty thing. She existed for beauty's sake, no other reason. She *was* like the marble Venus downstairs in the hall. Very much so. Especially in this half-toned moonlight. Her pointed breast looked like marble. Her neck looked fragile.

A bat came in. On tiptoe Mr. Buford drove the animal from the room. His feet were bare. But he tiptoed that he might walk yet more noiselessly. Then on tiptoe he left the bedroom and went downstairs.

The hall was very dark. Mr. Buford was glad he could not see Apollo. He caught Venus by the throat. Where was her heart— He hurt his arm on her hard, pointed breast. Why had she hurt him— And he went back to that fragile throat. Clutched it. Struggled there in the dark hall by himself with a piece of rock, with a pretty thing that existed for beauty's sake alone and no other earthly reason.

He struggled with rock, with matter, with natural law. And Venus toppled. She leaned toward him. With all his strength he held the rock back for a while. But Mr. Buford was sixty-nine and frail. When he fell Venus crashed down upon him, her pointed breast triumphant. And Marie, next morning, found them there in the hall, locked in each other's arms. For Mr. Buford had not gone to sleep without squirming and struggling.

MID-WESTERN

By Margaret Leroy

WHATEVER Aprils I may know,
April will always mean to me
A wet bank dark with violets,
A whitely blossoming locust tree.

And the valiant furrows of the plains
Could call me blithely from defeat,
Remembering like a battle shout
The lyric of the winter wheat!

EVERY man has two fatherlands. The first is where he was born; the second is where he first fell in love.

TO A BOY ON THE DEATH OF HIS SWEETHEART

By Richard Le Gallienne

YOU say—she died last night, and was so fair:
Come, let us sit and talk, and tell me all.
But twenty was she, and such golden hair!
And O tomorrow is her funeral.

Your life goes with her—you are twenty-two?
Come, drink this glass, and tell me more of her,
Her hair was gold, you said, her eyes were blue;
She was too young to die, she was too fair.

And all the treasure of her heart and mind
Rifled and wasted, lost and gone—ah! where?
And all her beauty scattered on the wind,
Like rose leaves on the garden, here and there.

And naught is left for you except to die,
Or be her pilgrim, till you meet once more;
Hers was the loveliest face under the sky,
Time never made a face like hers before.

Ah! let me go with you, and kneel and pray,
And take these flowers, sweet as her young breath;
And then, at the sad ending of the day,
Let you and I for her give thanks to Death—

Death that was kind, and loved her all too well
To watch her beauty wither here away,
But took her while she had so sweet a smell,
All in her blossom, like a hawthorn spray.

Death that is kind to her is kind to you:
Though eighty years shall whiten on your head,
She still shall be the morning and the dew,
And live for ever lovely, being dead.

RÉPÉTITION GÉNÉRALE

By George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

§ 1

The Great Illusion.—A dog is a standing proof that most so-called human rights, at bottom, are worth nothing. A dog is proverbially devoid of any such rights, and yet it lives well and is happy. For one dog that is starved and mistreated there are 10,000 that are coddled and overfed. How many human beings, even under the perfect democracy which now exists in the United States, are so comfortable and contented? Perhaps a few actors —that is about all. . . Moreover, it is idiotic to say that a dog's life is empty and bestial. A dog has highly fastidious tastes in food; it knows how to play and to be gay; it has a talent for amorous adventure; it acquires manners and prefers good society. In all these ways it is surely much superior to the average Methodist. Yet more, a dog is very religious and its religion is free from superstition. The god it believes in is its master, and that god actually exists, and is actually concerned about its welfare, and actually rewards it and punishes it, on a plan comprehensible to dogs and meeting with their approval, for its virtues and vices. Dogs need not waste any time over insoluble theological problems. Their god is plainly visible and wholly understandable—they have no need of clergy to guess for them, mislead them and get them into trouble. . . Yet a dog has none of the great rights that men esteem, glory in and die for. It cannot vote. It cannot get converted by Dr. Billy Sunday. It cannot go to jail for some great and lofty principle—say equal suffrage or birth control. It is barred from the Elks, the Harvard Club and Congress. It cannot serve its country by dying of septicæmia or acute gastro-enteritis. It cannot read the *Nation*. It cannot subscribe to the Y. M. C. A. It cannot swear at waiters. It cannot eat in Pullman dining-cars. It cannot be a Presbyterian. . .

§ 2

On the Wisdom of Children.—Children are not so foolish as their elders sometimes believe them to be. Take, for example, little boys. A little boy may wish, when he grows up, to be an Indian, a detective, a fireman, a cowboy, a drum-major, a chariot driver in a circus or a burglar. But who ever heard of a little boy who wanted, when he grew up, to be a clergyman?

§ 3

Venus As She Is.—The absurd theory that women have beautiful forms has been pretty well blown up as one of the curious by-products of the war. Immediately they began putting on the uniforms of elevator boys, car conductors, train announcers and so on, their absolute lack of grace was unescapably revealed. A man ordinarily looks better in uniform than in mufti; the tight lines set off his figure. But a woman is at once given away: she looks like a dumb-bell run over by an express train. Below the neck by the bow and below the waist astern there are two masses that simply refuse to fit into a balanced composition. Viewed from the side, with an exaggerated S bisected by an imperfect straight line, she in-

evitably suggests a drunken dollar-mark. Her ordinary clothing cunningly conceals this fundamental imperfection. It swathes those impossible masses in draperies, soothingly uncertain of outline. But putting her into uniform is like stripping her. Instantly all her alleged beauty vanishes.

§ 4

An American Translation.—Vox populi, vox dei: The voice of the people is the voice of the gallery god.

§ 5

The Puritan as Artist.—The saddest thing that I have heard in the concert hall for years is Herbert K. Hadley's overture, "In Bohemia." The title is a magnificent piece of profound, if unconscious, irony. One looks, at least, for a leg flung in air, a girl kissed, a cork popped, a flash of drawer-ruffles. What one encounters is a meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference. Such prosy correctness and hollowness, in music, is almost inconceivable. It is as if the most voluptuous of the arts were suddenly converted into an abstract and austere science, like comparative grammar or astro-physics. "Who's Who in America" says that Hadley was born in Somerville, Mass., and "studied violin and other branches in Vienna." A prodigy thus unfolds itself: here is a man who lived in Vienna, and yet never heard a Strauss waltz. This, indeed, is an even greater feat than being born an artist in Somerville, Mass.

§ 6

The Drama of Ideas.—The American "drama of ideas," of which one hears much, may be said to be grounded upon the following irrevocable ideology: the idea that every American traveling in a foreign land, however fragrant and beautiful, cherishes an overpowering desire to return immediately to his small home town in Indiana; the idea that all persons placed on trial before the law, particularly those accused of murder, are guiltless; the idea that the mere recollection of one's mother is enough to restrain one from tampering with a beautiful married woman; the idea that the accumulation of great wealth inevitably brings with it great unhappiness; the idea that all poor girls are virtuous; the idea that whenever a villain succeeds in getting hold of a hero's revolver and subsequently, after taunting the hero, essays to shoot him, the villain is always frustrated through the fact that the hero has exercised the preliminary caution either to remove the cartridges or to load the gun with blanks; the idea that a thirty-year-old actor in a white night-shirt kneeling beside a bed saying "Now I lay me down to sleep" in a deep bass voice is the estranged couple's six-year-old son Bobbie; the idea that when a trivial fire breaks out in a remote corner of the city the skies for miles around are promptly suffused with a deep crimson glow; and the idea that the play is worth two dollars.

§ 7

Literary Categories.—Romanticism and realism coalesce where they touch, and even their farthest frontiers are curiously close. Even such a gifted romantic as Robert W. Chambers holds himself in: his heroes may be seven feet in height, but so far he has never made them eight or ten. And even such a realist as Dreiser is full of discreet reservations: he tells us about the time his hero attempted a poor working girl, but he never tells us about the time he had cholera morbus, or picked up *pediculæ* at a Baptist prayer-meeting, or found a Croton-bug in his soup. Between lies the domain of the romantico-realist. He avoids both the operatic and the not-to-be-mentioned, and thus, as the phrase is, plays safe. On the one hand he lifts his hero's stature an inch or so and counts every dollar of his income twice. And on the other hand he gives us a glimpse of his

heroine, now and then, in her bath. Thus, full of prudence, he satisfies both our yearning for the fabulous and our yearning for the scandalous. The author of the Old Testament was just such a romantico-realist. Benvenuto Cellini was another. Anatole France is a third. And among writers in English of the present age, perhaps the most adroit of all is George Moore.

§ 8

Definition.—Chorus-man: One whose father and mother had prayed for a boy.

§ 9

A Certain Prejudice.—Of all men, the most offensive to me personally is what is called the "hustler"—that is, the man of superabundant and ever-obvious energy, the fellow who is always in a hurry, the slave of intrusive telephone calls and unintelligible engagements, the man who never relaxes and expands. He is chiefly to be found among lawyers, fashionable physicians and "good business men"—three classes I heartily detest, and never have anything to do with if I can help it. I used to wonder about this prejudice. Such men, logically considered, have undoubted merits. They fling themselves gallantly upon disagreeable tasks, they discharge a necessary function, they heroically use themselves up. But now I know why I dislike them. I am, by nature, an indolent man. I like to laze along, dropping the task that begins to pall, evading the impossibly disagreeable task altogether. And beneath that indolence there is a first cause somewhat more profound, to wit, skepticism. I am constitutionally unable to believe in anything absolutely. Nothing seems to me to be wholly good, wholly desirable, wholly true. I am thus unable to dredge up much *emotion* for things, and so the man who lives by emotions, the man who works himself into a sweat about what seem to me to be trivialities, inanities, imbecilities—this man offends me as an artist offends a green-grocer. I am not as he is, and, not being as he is, I dislike him.

§ 10

Women's Names.—Woman's major and helpless handicap, under the newer order of Anglo-Saxon civilization, lies in the quality of the names bequeathed her at the font of baptism. However beautiful the woman, imagine a self-respecting man being able to love her madly if she be labeled with one of these stickers: Ferne, Juno, Gwladys, Alys, Mae, Emma, Rebecca, Maybelle, Gussie, Bella, Maida, Beulah, Grecia, Amanda, Juanita, Charity, Lucrece, Esme, Geta, Evadne, Iole, Lena, Salome, Manilla, Mignonette, Jacqueminot, Rhea, Nanci, Parma, Polly, Valli, Oza, Titia, Ola, Veronica, Sadhi, Roxie, Phanny, Regina, Ruby or Grayce.

§ 11

Epigrams.—Nine-tenths of the world's epigrams concern a man and a woman either after supper or before breakfast.

§ 12

The Mime.—The fundamental objection to actors, stripping the business of all mere sophistry and snobbery, is that they give away the idiotic vanity of the whole male sex. An actor is simply a man who, by word and strut, says aloud of *him*self what all normal men think of *them*selves. Thus he exposes, in a highly indiscreet and disconcerting manner, the full force of masculine vanity. But I doubt that he exaggerates it. No healthy male is ever actually modest. No healthy male ever thinks or talks of anything save himself. His conversation is one endless boast—often covert, but always undiluted. His politics is a mere sneering at what he conceives to be inferiors; his philosophy is simply an exposure of asses; he cannot imagine himself save as superior, dominating, the center of situations. Even his theology is seldom more than a

stealthy comparison of himself and God, to the disadvantage of God. . . The youngest flapper knows all this. Feminine strategy, in the duel of sex, consists almost wholly of an adroit feeding of this vanity. Man makes love by braggadocio. Woman makes love by listening. . . Once a woman passes a certain point in intelligence she finds it almost impossible to get a husband: she simply cannot go on listening without snickering. . .

§ 13

Love.—Love, as the word has it, is impossible between an old man and a young girl not, as is commonly held, because youth seeks youth but more precisely because age seeks age. What a man over forty seeks in love is comfort—and this he may find only in one similarly seeking it. What a young girl seeks in love is a species of discomfort—and this she may find, readily enough, in an alliance with a man seeking comfort alone. A love that is comfortable is unknown to youth: when love becomes comfortable it is, to youth, no longer love. A young girl's love is of a piece with riding on a shoot the chutes, having a small fishbone lodge in the windpipe, and stepping suddenly from a warm room onto a snow-covered balcony.

(a) Love is the emotion that a woman feels always for a poodle dog and sometimes for a man. (b) Marriage is based on the theory that when a man discovers a particular brand of beer exactly to his taste he should at once throw up his job and go to work in the brewery.

§ 14

Sex Hygiene.—All the current books on so-called sex hygiene—there must be hundreds of them and their editions run to hundreds of thousands—are founded upon a fundamental pedagogical error. That is to say, they are founded upon an attempt to explain a romantic mystery in terms of an exact science. Nothing could be more futile: as well try to interpret Beethoven in terms of algebra—as many an idiot contrapuntist, indeed, has tried to do. The mystery of sex presents itself to the young, not as a biological problem to be solved, but as a romantic emotion to be accounted for. The only result of the laborious effort to explain its phenomena by seeking parallels in botany is to make botany obscene. This is not only a waste of time; it is also a gross offense against the most respectable of the biological sciences—perhaps the only one that *is* respectable—at all events, the only one suitable for study by the hopeless old maids and senile clergymen who write sex hygiene books.

§ 15

The Eternal Danger.—In every unbeliever's heart there is an uneasy feeling that, after all, he *may* awake after death and find himself immortal. This is his punishment for his unebelief. This is the agnostic's hell.

§ 16

The Flattered Ghost.—The desire for posthumous fame, so often discussed with great wonder by psychologists, is actually easily explained. It is grounded upon the plain fact that it is absolutely impossible for the average man, even the average intelligent man, to imagine his own annihilation. He always imagines himself present at the post-mortem doings in his honour, and enjoying them. He even imagines himself getting a pleasurable feeling of revenge out of them. He will gloat, on his astral plane, over the discomfiture of those who mistook him, while he lived, for a mere *Homarus vulgaris.*

§ 17

On Emotional Acting.—Speaking in a general way, an emotional actress may be described as one who is successful in kindling and exciting the emotions of

her audience. The emotions usually so enkindled and excited by the emotional actress are as follows:

1 to 10 inc.—To throw something.

§ 18

A Backwater of Progress.—The world suffers infinite agonies from the fact that the man who made the first telephone bell was stone-deaf. The soul of an evangelist, a soap-box orator, a chautauquan was in him; he sacrificed everything else that sound offers to its mere capacity for shocking. Think of the infernal shrilling that, in consequence, assaults the universe, and particularly the United States. Telephones have been improved in a thousand ways. The majority of them are now so far perfected that they actually transmit speech; words spoken into them are comprehensible, at the other end, to a child, and even, on fair days, to a telephone operator. But the same old bell is used—harsh, raucous, unspeakably annoying. Its sound is too loud. It is too high in pitch. It bangs the ear too violently. Why has no telephone engineer ever thought of offering a better and kindlier bell to civilized subscribers—one low in tone, say middle C; perhaps one striking two tones in harmony; above all, one less strident, less loud?

§ 19

The Uses of Snobbery.—All sound knowledge is essentially aristocratic, and even snobbish. The capacity for it is a mark of distinction, and sets off what, in all ages, is the smallest and most exclusive of all castes of men. The average man is quite unfit for it; he can but seldom achieve the intellectual feat of believing what is true; his talents almost always stop with believing what is soothing. Every philosophy that bears a respectable repute in the world today started as a reaction against what was commonly believed at the time of its origin—that is, against the body of belief that was then orthodox and virtuous—the body of belief that distinguished the right-thinking man. Practically all great philosophers have been regarded, by their contemporaries, as either criminals or lunatics, and often as both. Socrates, as every school-boy knows, was done to death because his doctrines gave intolerable offense to the great majority of respectable Greeks of his time. He was, in fact, the bugaboo of that age, as Nietzsche is of this. Whoever gave any credit to his notions was at once under suspicion as a perverse and sinister fellow, well worth watching by the *gendarmerie*. . . .

The revolutionary thinkers who grouped themselves about Charles Darwin were all denounced as intolerable scoundrels, and their ill-fame lingers, at least in some measure, even now. The higher sort of mob-leaders, of course, have ceased to make active war upon them — one would be rather shocked to hear an Archbishop of Canterbury call Huxley a *scélérat*. But this change is visible only in certain limited directions—where a certain degree of quasi-civilization, so to speak, has made itself felt. The great majority of Christian ecclesiastics—probably ninety-nine per cent.—are still committed to the theory that Huxley was a dirty rascal, and Spencer another, and Darwin another, and that Haeckel is the surviving arch-fiend of the gang. This is the reaction of the main body of respectable folk to the men who will live in history as the intellectual leaders of the nineteenth century—as the true exponents of its chief contribution to human progress. This is the immemorial attitude of men in the mass, and of their chosen prophets and pedagogues, to whatever is honest and penetrating and clear-headed and true.

THE DREAMER

By Vincent Starrett

TIRED with much dreaming, the dreamer lay down upon his bed and dreamed a beautiful dream. He dreamed that, tired by his dreaming, he went to bed and dreamed a beautiful dream. In this dream he was asleep on a strange couch, and One came and stood over him with vaguely familiar face.

No word was spoken, but there was a strange turmoil in the silences of his soul. It seemed that if he could only recall the presence at his bedside, and the occasion of its former visit, which dimly he seemed to remember, a great and beautiful truth would be revealed to him. Quite suddenly it flashed upon him, but before he could give a name to the revelation that had come to him, he dreamed that he awoke, and that One stood at his bedside with veiled features, whom dimly he recalled, but could not name. He knew that if he could but remember where before this scene had been enacted, a great and beautiful truth would be vouchsafed to him. As he looked, the figure raised its veil; but as the truth flashed over him, quite suddenly he awoke. No one stood at his bedside, but the door had a look about it as if someone had just gone out.



THERE are two classes of men: those who never regret a pleasure, and those who don't know what a pleasure is.



THERE is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about by the righteous, and that is being talked to.



A MAN regards a kiss as a speculation; a woman, as an investment.



RELATIVES are persons who live too near and die too seldom.

THE ROMANTIC JOURNEYS OF GRANDMA

By Thyra Samter Winslow

GRANDMA awoke with a start. She gained consciousness with the feeling that something was just about to happen. Then she sank back again on the pillow with a comfortable sigh of remembrance. Of course—this was the day on which she was going traveling.

Even on usual days, Grandma could not lie in bed, idle. So much more reason why she should be up and about, today, with so much to do. Her train left at twelve o'clock—she had had her ticket and her berth reservation for over a week, her trunk was all packed, there were just a few necessary articles to be put into her bag—but the morning would be busy, as all mornings were at Fred's.

Grandma bathed and dressed hurriedly, her bent, rheumatic fingers grasping each hook and button with a nervous haste. As usual, she was the first one in the bathroom. This morning she was especially glad. For at Fred's, Grandma's second son's house, where she was visiting now, there was only one bathroom and there were eight in the family without her, if you count the two babies. If you didn't get in the bathroom first . . .

Grandma put on her neat housedress, as was her wont. She could change her dress later, and stuff the housedress into her bag. She arranged her thin grey hair in neat waves around her face—she could smooth that again, too.

From a room at the other end of the house Grandma heard a baby commence to cry. It was Ruthie, Nell's youngest baby, just a year old, one of Grandma's two great-grandchildren. Grandma loved little Ruthie a great deal, a fine baby—still, it did seem good that she wouldn't have to take care of her any more for a long time. Not that Grandma minded work—she had always worked, she liked something to do—but here at Fred's house there were so few moments when she wasn't working. Not that Fred's family were mean to her! Grandma would have been indignant if you had suggested that. Didn't they work as hard as she did, and harder? At seventy-three, Grandma was still strong and capable; no wonder they expected her to do her share and accepted it without comment.

Fred was a good son and a good husband and a good father. Could you expect much more? But Fred never had much of a business head. Here he was, at forty-nine, just about where he had been fifteen years before, bookkeeper at the Harper Feed Store, a good enough position when times were better, but, with everything so high, Fred's salary didn't go very far. Still, no use complaining or worrying him about it, it was the best he could do. Fred never had had much ambition or "get up." It was a good thing he had bought the house, years before. It had seemed too big and rambling then. It was just about the right size now, though not so awfully modern—and quite hard to keep clean.

Emma, Fred's wife, was a good woman and a good housekeeper. She wasn't like the average daughter-in-law, either. She never quarreled with Grandma about things—in fact, she was

awfully kind, in her hurried, brusque way. Grandma sometimes wished she wasn't so quick about things, and decided—still, when one is as busy as Emma . . .

Emma was nearly Fred's age. They had been married twenty-five years and she had always been a good wife to him. They had three children, all girls. Grandma had been sorry there couldn't have been a son to help Fred share the burden of supporting the family. But things seemed going all right now—a little better than they had been, or, so the family seemed to think—and, as long as they were satisfied . . .

Nell, Fred's oldest daughter, had married, four years before, and had gone to housekeeping. But Homer Billingsley, the boy she had married, had been sick for almost a year, so they had given up their little cottage and were living "with the old folks." They had two children now, Freddie and Ruthie, nice, good children, too. Grandma liked Homer, Nell's husband, though she was sorry he was so much like Fred in his lack of ambition and power. Now that Homer was able to work again he had his old job at Malton's Hardware Store. There didn't seem much chance of his getting ahead there. Still, he was a good boy and awfully fond of Nell and the children.

Edna, Fred's second daughter, was stenographer at the First National Bank and made fifteen dollars a week. Edna was fine looking, really the beauty of the family. She paid her board every week, but never had much left over because she bought Alice's clothes, too, and, of course, being in the bank, she had to look nice herself. Alice, the youngest daughter, was seventeen and in High School. Grandma loved Alice, too. Of course the child was thoughtless, she could have helped her mother a little more with the housework or Nell with the babies, but Grandma knew that, at seventeen, it's pretty hard to sweep floors or take babies out. After all, Alice was young, and she ought to have a good time.

While she stayed at Fred's house, Grandma did her share of the work. Even this last morning she followed her usual routine.

She hurried to the room where Ruthie lay and soon had her quieted. When Ruthie had her bottle—Grandma had learned all about sterilizing, though she hadn't known there was such a thing when she brought up her own children—Grandma set the table, a plate, knife and spoon for each, salt and pepper casters that had been a wedding present to Emma and Fred, a butter dish with an uneven piece of butter in it, a sugar bowl containing rather lumpy sugar and a fluted sugar spoon, a dish of home-made plum preserves. She had the table all set when Emma hurried into the kitchen with a cheery, abrupt "Morning, Ma," and started the coffee.

At half-past seven all but Alice were ready for breakfast. Grandma had got the oatmeal out of the fireless cooker and boiled the eggs for Homer, who was rather delicate and needed eggs for breakfast. When the family sat down to their meal, Grandma put milk and sugar on little Freddie's oatmeal and saw that he ate it—Freddie didn't like oatmeal much.

"Well, Ma," said big Fred, who sat comfortably coatless, "so today's the day you go traveling."

"Yes, it is," said Grandma, and smiled.

"You got a good day for it. Let's see, you leave Lexington today at noon and get to New York tomorrow at two, don't you?"

"Yes, Fred," said Grandma.

"You know," he went on, munching toast as he talked, "I believe you enjoy traveling, going places. Never saw anything like it. Seems to me a woman your age would want to settle down, quiet. You could stay here all the time if you wanted to, you know that. Got a room all to yourself—more than you get at Mary's—and yet, off you go, after four or five months. Here you've got a good home and all that."

"Well," said Grandma, in her gentle, even tones, "you know you aren't the

only child I've got, Fred. There's Albert and Mary."

"Yes," Fred frowned. He disliked even hearing the name of Albert. It was the one thing that made him angry. "But we really want you, honest we do, Ma. Emma and the girls always miss you after you're gone."

"You bet," said Emma.

Grandma smiled. At least at Fred's home she was welcome and helpful. If she were only younger and stronger! At Mary's and Albert's, there was a wordless agreement that her visits end, almost automatically, at the end of four months. Only mere surface invitations of further hospitality were extended, "for politeness."

Fred and Homer finished eating and hurried off to business. Alice came down, then, and Grandma served her, bringing in hot coffee and oatmeal, as Emma started to clear away the dishes.

Alice ate rapidly, then kissed Grandma good-bye—she didn't come home at noon—and skipped off. Grandma and her daughter-in-law washed the dishes and, when the dishes were done, they made the beds, one standing on each side, straightening the sheets and pulling up the covers simultaneously.

"Sure will miss you, Ma," said Emma. "Nell's no help at all. Don't blame her. Freddie tagging at her heels and the baby crying."

While Emma straightened out the downstairs rooms, Grandma helped Nell bathe and dress the babies. Then the expressman rang and Grandma hurried to the door, saw that he took her trunk and put the check in her purse. Then Grandma cleaned up the room she had occupied. It was time, then, for Grandma to get ready for her journey. Usually, she helped prepare dinner after these tasks were done, peeling potatoes, setting the table, for at Fred's one ate dinner in the middle of the day.

Grandma put on her traveling dress. It was her best dress, of soft grey silk crepe, trimmed with a bit of fine cream lace at the throat. Albert had given it to her on her birthday, two years before. Over this she put her best coat of black ribbed silk, also a gift of Albert. She adjusted her neat bonnet—five years old but made over every year and you'd never guess it.

Emma and Nell were too busy with the dinner and the babies to go to the station with Grandma, but the streetcar that passed the corner went right to the station, and Homer and Fred would be there to tell her good-bye. At eleven—Grandma believed in taking plenty of time, you never could tell what might happen on the way to the station—Grandma kissed Emma and Nell and Freddie and Ruthie, giving Ruthie a very tender hug and Freddie a hearty kiss, in spite of much stickiness from the penny lollypop he had been eating. She took her bag and hurrying as fast as she could—Grandma took little, slow, rheumatic steps—caught the surface car.

In the railway station Grandma sat down gingerly on one of the long brown benches, carefully pulling her skirts away from suspicious, tobaccoy-looking spots on the floor, and waited for Fred and Homer and the train.

Fred and Homer came up, together, puffing, just before the train was due. Homer presented Grandma with a half-pound box of candy and Fred gave her a paper bag filled with fruit.

When the train came in, Fred and Homer both assisted Grandma in getting on, took her to her seat and kissed her, loudly, before their hurried exit—the Limited stops for only a minute at Lexington.

Then, as the train moved away, Grandma waved a fluttering good-bye to the two men and sighed again, with happiness. She was traveling!

II

Not consciously, of course, for she never would have admitted such a terrible fact, Grandma looked forward, all year, to her days of travel. Usually, each year contained three trips, each of about the same length, and these days were Grandma's golden milestones. Not that she wasn't happy the rest of the

time—of course she was—but this—well, this was different.

At Fred's now—Grandma was happy at Fred's, of course, everyone was friendly and pleasant, though her feet and head and sometimes her back ached at the end of the day. One isn't so young at seventy-three and younger people are apt to forget how tired seventy-three becomes, after innumerable answerings of the door, step-climbing and dish-washing. Grandma loved being useful, of course, but she did wish that there was a little more leisure, a little time to sit down and rest—if only Fred's and Albert's homes coud be combined, in some way!

Grandma had three children. When they were young there had never been much money, but Grandma had tried to do her best for them. They had lived in Lexington then, and the three had been brought up just alike and yet how differently they had turned out! There was Fred, quite poor but happy, still in Lexington, where he was born. Mary had married John Falconer when she was twenty-four and had gone to St. Louis to live, and Albert, the ambitious one of the family, had gone to New York in search of fortune and had found part of it, at least.

If only Fred and Albert hadn't been so foolish and quarreled, years ago! But they had. Albert had tried to give Fred advice and Fred had resented it. They had made up the quarrel, but there was nothing that Fred would let Albert do for him, even if Albert had wanted to do something. Fred liked to refer, in scorn, to his elder brother as "that New York millionaire," and say things about being "just as well off if I haven't got his money." But then, Albert probably forgot, most of the time, that he had a younger brother. Outside of a polite inquiry, when Grandma arrived, he never referred to Fred at all. It worried Grandma to think that her children weren't good friends, but she knew she could never do anything to make them feel differently. Years and circumstances had taken them too far apart.

Grandma had no favorite child, unless it was a slight, natural leaning toward her only daughter. She liked Albert and was glad she was on her way to visit him. She just wished that Albert wasn't so—well, so cold. He didn't mean anything, of course. When one is busy all day on the Stock Exchange one hasn't time for other things. And, when one is as rich as Albert, there are so many things to take up one's time. Albert was awfully good to Grandma. She told herself that many times. He asked her if she needed anything, whenever she visited him. He frequently gave her expensive presents. She wouldn't take any more money from him than she had to, and her wants were simple, for that wouldn't have been right, though she let him give her some on her last visit and had given it to Nell for Homer—he had been sick then—without letting Fred find out.

Grandma liked it all right at Albert's. How could there be anything to complain of? At seventy-three, Grandma had learned to make the best of things. Albert was Grandma's oldest child and now he was fifty-two. His ménage consisted of his wife, Florence; their two children, Albert, junior, who, at twenty-four, was being taught the business of Wall Street; their daughter, Arlene, twenty, and six servants.

The Albert Cunninghams lived in a very large apartment in Park Avenue. Mrs. Cunningham was of rather a good New York family. Albert had met her after his first taste of success and had been greatly impressed with her and with her antecedents. Even then Albert had learned to look ahead. The family had had some years of social strivings, but now lived rather quietly. Arlene had made her début the year before and now entertained and went out quite a little. Albert, junior, was rather a serious fellow, though he, too, enjoyed the social life that was open to him. Altogether, they were fairly sensible, decent people, a bit snobbish, perhaps, very self-centered, but with no really objectionable features.

The thing that Grandma couldn't understand nor enjoy in the Albert Cunninghams' family life was the, to her, great coldness and formality. Grandma's idea of how a family ought to live was the way Fred's family lived, only with more money and more leisure and more pleasure and a servant or two, friendly, jolly, intimate. At Albert's, the life was strangely lonely and distant. Grandma never felt quite at ease nor at home. She had no definite place in the family life. She had the fear, constantly, that she was doing something wrong, much more so than at Mary's, where her acts were criticized and commented on. No one ever gave Grandma a harsh word at Albert's. Albert, dignified; Florence, courteous, calm; Junior, a younger edition of his father; Arlene, gentle, distant, quiet,—were all kind to Grandma. But most of the time they unthinkingly ignored her. She didn't fit in, she knew that.

At Albert's, Grandma had her own room and her own bath, as did each member of the family. There was no regular "family breakfast." Albert and Junior breakfasted about nine, going to the office in the closed car. Florence and Arlene breakfasted in their rooms. Grandma had gone to the dining-room for breakfast, on her first visit there eight years ago, after Grandpa died and her own modest home had been broken up. But Florence decided that it would be more comfortable for Grandma if she breakfasted in her room. So each morning, about nine, Grandma's tray was brought up to her by Florence's own maid, Terry, who asked, each time, "if there is anything I can do?" Grandma rather resented a personal maid. Wasn't she able to bathe and dress herself, even if she was seventy-three? Grandma was always dressed when Terry knocked.

All day there was nothing for Grandma to do at Albert's. She couldn't help at all around the house. She found that out, at her first visit. There was no darning nor mending to be done—a sewing woman came in regularly to do the things that Terry could not do. Albert didn't care for the home dishes that had once delighted him and the cook didn't want anyone bothering around the kitchen. Grandma had luncheon at one, with Florence and Arlene, when they were at home, which was seldom enough. In the afternoon, on nice days, Grandma went for a drive, unless the cars were being used. Usually Grandma went alone, getting real pleasure out of the things she saw; sometimes Florence went with her. Florence, too, occasionally took Grandma to teas and receptions and musicales, most of which bored Grandma and at none of which did she feel at home.

Grandma wondered where all of the old ladies were in New York. She seldom saw any. At the theater, where she was taken once in a while, she would see white-haired old dowagers, carefully marceled and massaged, in evening gowns with very low-cut bodices. Grandma didn't mean that kind of old lady. She was always looking for comfortable old ladies, with neatly parted hair, ample old ladies with little rheumatic hands and wrinkles, but she never found them.

Dinner, at Albert's, was at seven. When the family dined alone, at home, the meals were about the same, good things to eat, but everything so cold and distant. It was hard for Grandma to remember just what to do, so that Florence and Arlene wouldn't think she didn't know, though they were always polite and gracious. Grandma was constantly afraid she would spill things when the maid presented the silver dishes to her or that she'd take too large a portion for politeness. Grandma was served first, you see, and that made it harder still—she couldn't watch to see the way the others did.

When the family was having a real dinner party Grandma found that it was easier for everyone if she had a tray in her room. She really liked that just as well—it was nice, seated at the little table in her room, comfortably unannoyed by manners. About half of the time the Albert Cunninghams did not dine at home—Arlene and Junior went

to numerous dinners and even Florence and Albert had frequent engagements. Then Grandma usually dined alone in the big empty dining-room, a little, lonely figure amid empty chairs, silver and glass. She would have preferred a tray in her room, then, but didn't like to mention it—this arrangement seemed to suit Florence. Grandma's meals were always excellently prepared and served, but eating alone in a big, still room isn't very jolly.

After dinner, Grandma was occasionally included in some social affair, but nearly always she was supposed to sit in the library until about nine or ten and then retire, as the other members of the family sometimes did when they were at home. The family saw that Grandma was given interesting light fiction and magazines full of stories and current events, but Grandma had never had enough leisure in her youth to find time to learn to enjoy reading. She could read only a short time without falling asleep.

Grandma knitted, too, so she was glad when the fad came back so she could be modern in something. Albert's family approved of knitting, and on the last visit her old fingers had made many pairs of grey and tan socks, with a bit of color worked into the tops of them. Now she was glad to be able to get to knitting more socks—she had had no time for it since she had been there before.

Yes—Albert and his family were awfully nice—of course they didn't mean anything when they paid no attention to Grandma, when their days went on as serenely undisturbed as if she were not there. They asked her how she felt, nearly every day, a cool "trust you are well this morning, Mother," and gave her presents. But thinking of the lonely hours in her room, the tiresome evenings, the long, useless, dragged-out days, Grandma wasn't enthusiastic over her visit with Albert.

III

Mary, Mrs. John Falconer, Grandma's youngest child, had always been a bit of her favorite. Mary still lived in St. Louis, where she had gone after her marriage. The Falconers had four children, two sons of eighteen and fourteen, two daughters, sixteen and eleven. John Falconer, a lawyer of moderate means, was quite stingy in family matters. Although he had a great deal more money than Fred, the family occupied a much smaller house, though it was modern and in a good neighborhood, and Grandma had to share the bedroom of the two daughters. Mary's family had an advantage over Fred's in having one maid, who did all of the cooking and washing and some of the cleaning, so there was not so much for Grandma to do. Grandma felt that she should have been very happy with the Falconers. But they were disagreeable people to live with. Grandma tried not to see their faults but it was not easy for her to be contented during her visits there.

The Falconers had the habit of criticism. Nothing was ever just right with them. Mary always told Grandma that if it hadn't been for Grandma's encouragement she would never have married John Falconer—if she had waited she probably could have done much better. John Falconer was a former Lexington boy whom Mary had met when he visited his old home. Grandma didn't remember that she had encouraged the match except to tell Mary that John was a nice boy and would probably make a good husband—Mary had been the one who seemed enthusiastic. But, somehow, Grandma was blamed whenever John showed disagreeable characteristics.

Mary was dissatisfied with her social position, with the amount of money John gave her to spend, with her children. She spoke slurringly of Albert and "his rich family who are in society." Mary would ask Grandma innumerable questions about the way the Albert Cunninghams lived, copy them when circumstances permitted and later to bring the unused bits of information into the conversation, with disagreeable slurs.

"I guess Albert wouldn't call this dinner good enough for him, would he? It's a wonder you are satisfied here, Mamma, without a butler to answer the door or a maid to bring breakfast to your room," or "It's a wonder Albert and Florence wouldn't do something for Irene. I bet she's a lot smarter and better looking than their stuck-up daughter. But not a thing does he do for her, except send a little box on Christmas—gave Irene a cheap wrist watch last year—you could buy the same kind right here in St. Louis. He could keep it for all I'd care."

The four Falconer children were badly brought up and noisy. They interrupted each other or all talked at once. At meals they reached across the table for dishes of food. The one maid had had no training and, as she did the cooking, her waitress duties consisted of putting bowls and platters of food on the table. Then John Falconer made a pretense of serving, always, after one or two plates, he'd "pass the things around so you can all help yourselves."

As there was no attempt to show Grandma any special favor—she was never served first, the first plate going to the person in the greatest hurry to get away, frequently Tom, the eldest son—usually when the bowl or platter reached Grandma there was little left for her. Grandma didn't mind this, unless the food happened to be a favorite—she had become accustomed to little sacrifices while raising her family. There was always enough bread and butter.

What Grandma did object to at Mary's was the spirit of unrest, of unkindness, the disagreeable taunts of the family, the noise and disorder. Everyone criticized Grandma, calling her attention to the way she held her fork, though their own manners were frequently insufferable. They criticized, too, Grandma's pronunciation of words, idioms of Lexington, and errors in grammar. These were made much of and repeated, with laughter. Then, too, if Grandma showed ignorance of any modern appliance or invention, this was thought to be a great joke and was introduced as a tit-bit in the table conversation.

Grandma darned all of the stockings at Mary's, there always seemed to be a basketful, and took care of the bedroom in which she slept, relieving the two girls of an unwelcome duty. She straightened the living-room, for Mary hated housework and grumbled about it and the overworked maid never quite got through her round of duties. But Grandma was not too busy at Mary's. She liked having something to do. It was the taunts that made her unhappy, the little barbed things the family said. John Falconer made Grandma feel that she was an actual expense, that the amount of food she ate was a real item in the household budget. Mary came to her with little whines about the relatives—though they lived in other cities and paid little attention to her—about her husband, how stingy he was, how much better she could have done, had she not taken her mother's advice in her marriage, about the children, how much money they spent, how they quarreled with each other, how disobedient they were. Grandma always went from Mary's home to Fred's, and, though she knew the work that awaited her, the tired hours in store, she actually looked forward to the next visit.

IV

So now, Grandma was traveling again. And, as the train covered the miles away from Lexington, Grandma put aside the worries of the visit she had just had, the memories of the unpleasantness of the visit with Mary, the apprehensions of the visit that awaited her. Grandma shed, all at once, all of these things and emerged, a wonderful, new personality, a dear, happy little old lady, traveling, Grandma became, as she always became, three days of each year, the woman she would have liked to have been, the old lady she sometimes dreamed she was.

First, Grandma rang for the porter. She was well supplied with money for Albert always sent her a check for traveling expenses. She loved feeling independent, a personality. When the porter came, Grandma demanded, in the gentle, well-bred tone Florence might have used, that the porter bring her an envelope for her bonnet, a pillow for her head, a stool for her feet. She tipped him generously enough to make him grin his thanks and hurry to her whenever she rang. There were even porters who said, "Yes'm, you traveled on my car before," when they saw Grandma.

From her bag, Grandma took out a small black lace cap, with a bit of perky lavender ribbon on it and adjusted it on her thinning hair. At Mary's house they were always telling her how thin her hair looked, the young boy even hinting something about old people who ought to be wearing wigs. Albert had sent her the cap in her last Christmas box, and, as usual, she had saved it for traveling. Grandma put on, too, a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. She had needed them for years, but at first a sort of pride in her good eyes had kept her from getting them. Then, at Fred's, she had been too busy; at Albert's, no one paid much attention to her needs; at Mary's, they had laughed at her nearsightedness without offering a corrective. When she was at Albert's, last year, she had told him, finally, her need of glasses and the next day Florence had driven her to an occulist. But she felt that she had annoyed and disturbed Florence, that getting lasses for an old lady wasn't just in Florence's pattern of things.

Grandma put the cheap candy and the fruit from Fred and Homer into her bag. It had been awfully kind and good of them. She took out her grey knitting and added row after row, as the minutes passed.

Then Grandma rang for the porter again. But, before he came, she looked around at her fellow passengers, as she always looked at them when she traveled. Two seats in front of her sat a tired-looking woman of about forty, with a thin, drawn face. Knitting in hand, Grandma took slow, careful little steps up the train to her.

"How do you do?" said Grandma, with her sweetest smile, "I wonder if you won't have tea with me, keep an old lady company? It seems so, so unsocial, having tea alone."

The woman gasped and looked at Grandma. She saw the well-dressed, comfortable little old lady, with the frill of soft lace at throat and wrists, a tiny black cap on her grey hair, grey knitting in her gnarled hands, a picture-book Grandma for all the world.

"Why, yes, I—that would be delightful," she said.

Grandma led the way back to her own seat. When the porter came she ordered tea and toast and little cakes and sandwiches, "and some of that good orange marmalade you always have on this road."

Grandma hadn't had any lunch but she didn't say so. When the little table was adjusted and the tea things brought in, Grandma poured tea, as if, every day, in her own home, the routine included the serving of tea at a dear little tea table.

Grandma listened sympathetically to the other woman's story. Grandma knew that each woman who was traveling had a story and would tell it, if encouraged at all, but she wasn't much interested—she had heard so many stories during the past years. Then, when her guest had finished, Grandma talked.

Grandma didn't say much, really. She told about her visits, about her two wonderful sons and her splendid daughter. As Grandma told these things, they, too, emerged into beauty, the journey threw a magic over them as it did over Grandma. The things she told were so real that Grandma believed them herself, because she wanted to.

"I have three children, so, of course, I spend four months of the year with each of them. Each of them wanted me all the time—they are such good children—so the best way seemed to be to

divide the time. I'm on my way to visit my older son, now. Maybe, as you've lived in New York, you've heard of him—he has a seat on the Stock Exchange and is director in so many things—Albert Morrell Cunningham. His wife was a Mornington, and they have two such wonderful children, a boy and a girl. Arlene made her début last year, so you can imagine what a good time she's having and what fun it is to be there with her, she's so popular and pretty. I'll show you her picture, later. Each day that I'm there, nearly, they do something for me, a drive in the park, theatres and concerts. I really get too gay in the city—it's wonderful.

"Then I go to see Mary, my only daughter, and you know how a mother feels toward a daughter. She is married to a lawyer in St. Louis and they have four of the dearest children. The oldest, a boy, is eighteen and the youngest, a girl, is eleven. Quite an ideal family, isn't it? Mary's husband is quite well-to-do, but they live so comfortably and simply, no airs at all. Mary doesn't care a great deal for society, just wrapped up in her husband and children, but she goes with such nice people.

"I've just come from my second son, Fred. And there—perhaps you'd never guess it, people have flattered me so long about looking youthful that I believe them—but I've two great-grandchildren, the oldest three years old, the youngest just a year, the dearest things. Nell, the children's mother and her husband and the children are all living right at home. Fred and his wife won't hear of them going away. They were housekeeping for a while, but the family didn't like it—they are all so devoted to the children. There are two other girls in the family besides Nell and they have a great big old-fashioned home, set way back in a broad lawn, lots of trees and flowers. Yes, it's Fred's own home. It's a good thing he bought such a big one, years ago, he needs it with so many young people. They do have such good times together—and, of course, it's young people who keep us all young, these days."

Then, from her bag, Grandma drew a bundle of photographs. The photographers, from the maker of the shiny products of Lexington to the creator of the soft sepias of Fifth Avenue, had, with their usual skill at disguise, smoothed away the lines of discontent on Mary's face, the bold impudence of her children, had added a little kindness and humanness to Florence and Albert, had made Fred's family look placid, undisturbed and prosperous. The pictures showed Grandma's family to be all she had said of them, even to dimpled little Ruthie, taken just a few weeks before, on a post card at a neighborhood photographer's.

It didn't sound like bragging, as Grandma told things. It was just the simple, contented story of an old lady of seventy-three, who spent her days satisfied and serene, traveling from one loved and beloved set of relatives to another.

When tea was finished, Gradnma allowed the other woman to return to her seat with a gentle nod and a "thank you for keeping an old woman company." Then Grandma knitted and looked at the passengers again. Always, whenever she traveled, out of the set that presented itself, Grandma was able to find those she needed.

A tiny, plump little woman with a too-fat baby was seated just a seat or so back of Grandma, on the left. It was to her that Grandma went, now.

"May I hold the baby?" she asked. "I know how tired you must get, holding him all day, on a day like this. I've two great-grandchildren. Your baby is just about in between them, in age, I think. Sometimes I hold them for just a little while and I know how heavy babies can be."

Deftly, Grandma took the child in her arms and settled him comfortably.

"When dinner is announced," said Grandma, "you go and eat. I'll take care of the baby. It will be a rest for you—it is so difficult traveling with a baby—you'll enjoy your dinner more

alone. Sometimes, when we go on picnics with my great-grandchildren. . . .

Grandma told about the babies, about their mother, about her own grown-up children, whom she visited. She even told little things about their childhood, as mothers tell to mothers, but, always, she came back to the present, telling of her visits, encased in the rose color of her journey. Not that Grandma told deliberate falsehoods. She didn't claim servants or wealth for Fred nor jollity for Albert. But each fact she brought forth was broidered with the romance that travel brought to Grandma—the stories all showed Grandma welcome, beloved, happy, made her children kind, considerate, affectionate, successful, capable. Grandma helped her listeners, too, for she spread some of this haze over them. You can't envy, you must enter into the pleasure of it, when an old lady of seventy-three shows you the treasures that a lifetime has handed to her.

Grandma smiled as she sat with the little mother and her baby. And she smiled as she held the heavy, squirming bundle, while the mother ate dinner.

"It's a real pleasure to help you even a little," said Grandma, as the woman came back from the dining car to claim her baby and thank Grandma.

Grandma washed her face carefully before she went in to her own dinner. She took a clean handkerchief from her bag, dainty, lavender bordered, the present that Edna, Fred's second daughter, had given her last Christmas. On it she sprinkled a bit of perfume, a gift from Alice, two years before. She smoothed her hair, brushed the dust from her waist. A new adventure always awaited her in the dining car.

She walked with stiff little steps the length of the three cars, holding tight to the seats as she passed. And, through the cars, she smiled at the children and to grown-ups, smiles a bit patronizing, perhaps, as smiles should be from such a distinguished, contented old ladly.

In the diner, Grandma was seated across from a stout, middle-aged man, who was eating an enormous meal. She smiled at him. He couldn't misjudge her—one doesn't flirt that way at seventy-three.

"It's a wonderful day for traveling, isn't it?" she said. "Last time I traveled, four months ago. . ."

Grandma was telling of her children, of her journeys.

Grandma ordered carefully—a steak, you are really safe about steaks when you travel, a fresh vegetable, a green salad, a bit of pastry, black coffee. Grandma ordered as if the ordering of a dinner were a usual but precious rite. She felt correct, prosperous, a woman of the world. The man across the table, pleased with his meal and moved a bit by Grandma's story of her happy and fortunate life, her devoted children, saw in Grandma, the things that made this devotion. He even grew a bit gallant.

"I can see why your children are so good to you, ma'am. It makes me wish I had a grandma or mother like you myself." This during mouthfuls.

Grandma was equal to it.

"Why me, I'm just what my children have made me. Just think of you, making such lovely speeches to an old lady. You're deserving of the best mother a man ever had, I'm sure."

There were more pretty speeches. The man became almost flowery. Grandma actually blushed, before she had finished her dessert. Grandma paid her check, adding her usual generous tip—the stranger had offered to pay but Grandma wouldn't have that, of course. Then, as Grandma arose, the man opposite rose, too, and courteously escorted her through the cars and to her seat, stopping for a moment to talk.

Grandma couldn't knit at night. The motion of the car and the electric lights were not a good combination for her old eyes. She put her knitting into her bag, and extracted a deck of cards, flamboyant, with green and gold gift-looking backs. She chose now two young women and a good-looking young man in his early thirties. She approached

them all with the same question.

"Wouldn't you like a game of bridge? It seemed so lonely, an evening alone, in a sleeper—"

Strangely, all three did play bridge and would like a game. The porter brought a little table, again, and they played, rather indifferently, to be sure—Grandma was no expert and one of the young women played even a poorer game than she did—but several hours passed pleasantly. Then, after they stopped playing, Grandma brought the fruit from her bag. Grandma told them about Fred bringing the fruit to her, and, as they ate, she told, too, of her visits, of her children, her grandchildren and the two little great-grand ones. The three card-players really seemed interested, so of course the photographs were brought out for a round of approval.

After the guests hed gone to their seats, Grandma had her berth made up. She was rather particular about this—she wanted it made with her feet to the engine. Grandma thought this knowing about head and foot gave her a traveled air. Besides, she really didn't like to feel that she was traveling backwards.

In the dressing-room she put on her violet silk dressing gown, a gift from Florence three years before, which she kept carefully for traveling, and a frivolous little cap of cream lace, to keep the dust out of her hair while she slept. She spread her ivory traveling articles in their leather case—five years old on her last birthday—before her, and, as she prepared for sleep, talked pleasantly with the women who happened to come into the dressing-room while she was there.

Grandma slept fairly well for traveling, waking up frequently to pull up the shade and look out on the hurrying landscape, the occasional lights, the little towns. She thought it was mighty pleasant traveling.

She was up at seven and dressed swiftly. A new woman had got on during the night and now occupied the seat opposite Grandma, a well-gowned woman in her late thirties, with a smart, city-like air.

Grandma nodded a pleasant good morning.

"We seem to be making good time," she said.

"Yes, indeed," the woman smiled, "a pleasant day for traveling."

With the air of one born traveler to another, Grandma talked a bit, then motioned the woman to sit beside her. The pleasant conversation gave Grandma a warm feeling of well-being. She suggested breakfast and the two of them went in together, the younger woman steadying Grandma just a bit when the train swayed round a curve.

It was a pleasant breakfast. Grandma ordered three-minute eggs. They were the way she liked eggs best, but she seldom had them. At Albert's it seemed so self-assertive to ask for things like that, special directions and everything—and at Fred's and Mary's!

Grandma and her new friend talked about New York, about plays they had both seen the year before. They discussed food and the high cost of living, servants, the usual things that two hardly acquainted women talk of, when circumstance throws them together. There was nothing condescending in the new acquaintance's attitude. Why should there have been? Grandma was neither an unnecessary member of a cool, indifferent household nor an overworked old woman—she was the ideal Grandma, cultured, clever, kindly. It was no wonder, then, that, after breakfast, the two of them should loiter in Grandma's seat and Grandma should show a few family photographs and dwell, pleasantly, on how fortunate she was in having such splendid sons, such a lovely daughter and such wonders of grandchildren, to say nothing of the two babies.

Then the woman suggested that she and Grandma go to the observation car, and, before long, Grandma was seated in a big chair, knitting on the grey sock, again, and glancing at the flying scenery.

All the morning Grandma's former acquaintances came to talk to her. The

thin woman with the sad face offered her some candy. Grandma had a little chat with the plump mother and baby and held the baby again while his mother ate luncheon. The stout man, reading a magazine, dropped it long enough to come over and ask Grandma how she was feeling and if there was anything he could do for her. Grandma's bridge companions, now well acquainted, with the sudden friendship that travel brings, gathered around Grandma for a chat, laughing at everything. Several others, coming into the car, stopped for a word with Grandma.

Grandma and her latest acquaintance had luncheon together, too. Then, after luncheon, Grandma prepared, a whole hour ahead, as she always did, for the end of her journey. She washed off as much of the soot as she could. She took off the little lace cap and replaced it with her decent old bonnet, which had been resting in its bag all this time. She slipped on her black traveling coat over her grey crêpe dress. She took out a clean handkerchief, sprinkling a bit of perfume on it. Before closing her bag, Grandma took out the cheap candy that Homer had brought to the station and gave it, with a gracious smile, to the woman with the baby. It was good to be able to give something—and, besides, what could she do with the candy at Albert's? She didn't care for candy and even the servants would have laughed at it.

Grandma closed her bag then and sat waiting. Her chance acquaintances passed, nodded, smiled and talked. Grandma was a real person of importance, a dear, happy old lady, with a devoted family, spending her life contentedly divided among them. Didn't all these people know about Grandma? Hadn't they heard of her children and her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren? Hadn't they seen their photographs, even? Didn't they know that, after four pleasant months with Fred and his happy, jovial family, she was on her way to visit Albert, rich and prominent and kind?

V

THE train drew into Grand Central Station. Grandma, trembling a little, for the excitement of traveling is apt to make one tremble at seventy-three—Grandma allowed the porter to brush her coat, bade farewell to her train acquaintances, followed her bag down the aisle and into the station.

A man in a chauffeur's uniform took Grandma's bag and addressing Grandma politely, gravely, told her that Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham were sorry, but engagements prevented them from meeting her. They would see her at dinner at seven.

Grandma, with short, unsteady little steps, went out to the waiting car. There was something very near a tear in her eye. After all, traveling has its difficulties when one is seventy-three. The shell of radiance, of smiling independence, of being cared-for, important, loved, fell away. Grandma was just a little, tired, lonely old lady again. Another of Grandma's romantic journeys was over.



A WOMAN can love only one man at a time. Her husband is lucky if he's that man.



THE OBLITERATING MULTITUDE

By Edwin D. Cahn

MILDRED'S taxicab stopped, owing to a block at the corner, and Mildred slid the little mirror in which she had been admiring her face into her bag and glanced out of the window.

A short, stoutish man with a sort of puzzled pucker on his ruddy face was approaching on the sidewalk and Mildred's light blue eyes studied him with a sort of impatient curiosity. Owing to the press of vehicles he could not cross the street, and he came to a halt, therefore, directly opposite the door of her taxicab. He did not see her for the reason, as she very well understood, that he never peered inside of cabs—he was that kind of man.

She leaned forward and opened the door.

"Get in, Tom, I want to speak to you."

He started; looked for a second as if he meant to refuse, and then clambered in.

"Blowing it in already, eh?" he said and looked at her smart costume, the expensive details of hat and boots and gloves and hot-house violets and the new hand-luggage piled about her.

Mildred's lips drew down at the corners. "There's not much to blow. However, I've still a little bit left."

He made a gesture as if it were no concern of his and looked at her with eyes in which there was a curious mixture of pain, contempt and uncomprehending wonder.

"I can't think what you can have to say to me," he said as the taxi started on.

"Well, I never expected to see you again," she resumed, her slender gloved fingers playing with the violets, "and it was just an impulse when I saw you out there. You looked so fat and funny and forlorn." She gave the little purring laugh that once had thrilled him with delight but had so many, many times since annoyed him to the point of frenzy.

"I'm not forlorn, Mildred! Damn it, don't get any of your sentimental dime-novel notions now, for it's forever too late!"

"Of course you're not, Tommie, you just looked that way and so I asked you in. I thought I'd tell you that I'm going out home. I never did belong back east anyway—stifling place!" She sighed. "Ah, Tommie, I've been cheated out of so much in my life, and, just think, God meant me to be so happy."

She bent her head like a weary lily, studying him, he knew, through her long pale lashes.

He dragged out his watch. "What was it you wanted to say? I got a date at the wholesalers."

Her wistful languor dropped away like a garment. "Nothing, Tommie, except good-bye. And I'm sorry I ever let you spoil my life!"

"Same here," he commented grimly and leaned over to stop the cab.

She put out her hand.

"There! I didn't mean to be nasty, Tom. I'm sorry that I wasn't the right woman for you. But you'll find her someday and marry and be quite happy."

The tears that she could always summon at will stood in her eyes.

"I guess you mean it—for the minute—and so I'll say thank you, Mil-

dred. Well, here's the station. What train are you going on?"

"The Limited."

"I'll put you on."

In five minutes more he was helping her up the steps of her Pullman, his careful eye on the man with the bags.

"I won't come in with you as your grips are O. K. I gotta hike not to miss my man. Bye, bye." His chubby hand, that was aways moist and red like a pickled beet, lifted the stiff and unbecoming hat off his thinning hair.

"Good-bye," she answered over her shoulder and disappeared into the train.

II

Mildred scarcely thought of him again. There was the confusion about her section; getting settled; the palpitating delight of the actual fact of traveling again—traveling with all the elegance possible, too—the best section in the best train on the best railroad; the satisfactory knowledge that her attire eclipsed by many degrees that of all the other women visible; an extravagant dinner in the diner; the consciousness that the conductor was impressed by her charms and that two lean commercial travelers eyed her constantly. She was sure the porter made up her berth first because he could see that she was an unusual person—that even his black soul bowed before the fair beauty of her ethereal "interesting" self.

She slept sweetly that night, her nightdress and cap and slippers a mass of dainty scented ribbons, her lips carefully rouged and her brows pencilled. One never could tell. . . .

After breakfast, when the lean drummers got off and there was nobody but women and children in sight, she leaned her chin on her hand; carefully so as not to accentuate the slight gauntness of her throat, and stared out of the window at the rolling Minnesota corn land. Frame houses, stock, black hogs, silos, elms and oaks, sluggish shallow "cricks" as Tom would have said. Tom was so hopelessly commonplace and vulgar. How could she have ever thought that she could be happy with a grocer? A grocer in a small town, moreover, a man who was a born measurer of sugar and weigher of cheese, a congenial counter of small change and a hoarder of the same. A man who was proud of being elder in the church where he had been christened and who liked to tinker around the house at night and on holidays.

Her eyes followed the lonely strings of telegraph poles racing over the land. Black soil, cottonwoods with leaves all turned yellow like big gold coins. Anyway he hadn't been too awfully bad about money—at the last anyway. Avenues of young poplars—set out for windbreaks—probably. Ugh! the ugly flat country, how she hated it! California for hers, where it never froze or snowed and where there were always flowers and something beautiful to look at, no matter where you went. And the people! Some zip—and lots of chance for a good time, like—

Her thoughts flew back fifteen years and she smiled a vain self-satisfied smile. Guess those humdrum, self-righteous, gossiping stick-in-the-muds whose opinion Tom thought was more precious than rubies, would have sat up with a jerk if they had known about how she once—or, above all, Norris.

Her mind gave itself up to the image that had never ceased to haunt it for very long; about which had revolved all her discontents, her nostalgias, her day dreams; the conscienceless longings of her innermost heart.

Now, at last she was leaving behind all the hampering facts of the stultifying past; was speeding back to the old, happy, reckless, delightful days; speeding as fast as steam and Tom's dollars could hurry her. Back to where the ocean beat its blue body against the golden sand; where the winds were soft and the curtain of night was fragrant with orange blossoms pinned back with great big stars; where people dared to be themselves and snap their fingers in the faces of the critical; where Norris, as recent letters from an old accom-

plice told her, still rolled 'em as high as in the old days. Her mind hurried from the visions of a purple but satisfactory past to dreams of a future which she felt was to be ideal.

Norris had never married. Mildred knew why, too, and upon that certain knowledge built the whole glittering palace of her dreams. Man of the world as he was, sport and spender, fawned upon and pursued by women galore for his wealth—and by many more for himself—he still remembered and was faithful to his Mildred. Remembered the tall, fair, compliant girl who had typed his letters and amused so many hours stolen from the world. She had been his pale "cherry blossom," his "sly, silky Puss Puss"; had lent all the adroit deceptions of which her devious nature was capable to help him conceal their intimacy—proud at his praise that "not a soul on earth has an idea about us."

To be the chosen toy of a rich man, to hold her head high as an honest business woman, and all the time—

Mildred chuckled like a particularly naughty imp over a remembered piece of super-delightful deviltry, and then she frowned as she thought of the complicated chain of family circumstance that had dragged her East, had kept her there three years, and had finally thrown her into Tom Garvice's short arms.

She had been an uncomfortable armful, no doubt about that. And an extravagant one. She'd worn his nose blunt at the grindstone, estranged him from his friends and finally from his people with her "unconventionality." She pulled out her little mirror and looked complacently at her reflection. Fifteen years and they had scarcely touched her in passing. Expertly she wielded a lip stick, aware of and totally indifferent to the horrified gaze of a little girl across the aisle.

She was very contented and hummed a song that Norris had liked. She spent hours in the dressing-room ringing the changes in costume afforded by her extensive luggage, gratified by the knowledge that her fellow car mates were impressed to the point of talking about them.

III

After two days the train swung into New Mexico. It was very warm and Mildred sat out on the observation platform swathed in veils, her silk stockings ending in grey pumps which she elevated frankly to a comfortable position in the ironwork below the railing. The red buttes and burning distances slid by; the hot dust rose in powdery clouds and the sun glared down on her pale hair. Let it bleach a little if it wanted to, she meant to have it touched up when she got to Los Angeles anyway.

That done and a massage or two, if she looked tired, and a rest, and then she would set about letting Norris know that she was back. After fifteen weary, unprofitable years—back to take up the old life where she had so foolishly laid it down. He'd reproach her for her long desertion, of course, for that was the selfish way of men—always so concerned about how they suffer with hardly half a thought about a poor woman. Now there was Tom, going on like a lunatic when he found out about Norris—as if after all those years it mattered anyhow. Had she seen him since she met Tom? Well, then, why the distress.

Tom had stared at her and called her fish-hearted and burst into great blubbering tears that made him look like an overgrown urchin. She might have felt sorry for him only for that name. Her heart had ached with love for fifteen years—that was how fish-hearted she was—ached and longed and dreamed of Norris. Not a day of her life that his big brown eyes under their straight black brows had not looked at her, not an hour that she had not been conscious of him off there on the warm side of the world. Never, never! had she closed her eyes at night without thinking of him—of the delicious hours they had spent together.

Her whole life was one longing

memory of him, one great vehement hope that they would meet again. That remembrance was what had made life worth living in smug Etibokoke, and englamoured her dreams, and cast its rosy glow over her dull, dead days.

She gave herself great credit for the fact that during all that time she had not communicated with Norris nor he with her. She had lived up to the letter of her outward duty to Tom and had run no risk of loss in doing it either, for, as she considered, though half a world stretch between and years lie like dust over them, could hours such as she and Norris had enjoyed ever grow dim, ever lose their potent hold?

Serenely she journeyed back to claim her empire. It would be worth claiming too, judging from all she had heard. Norris had more than a million, a social position that she felt would be worth accepting when it was pressed upon her, all straight and slim and fair and patrician as she was and superlatively dressed as she would surely be. There'd be horses and motors and jewels. And Norris, getting on a trifle now, for he was some years her senior, would worship her as only a jealous husband with an attractive wife can worship. She had no smallest fears that she could not manage him. Certain memories—And, she told herself as she shut her languid eyes, she loved him better than anything on earth. Had loved him always. Perhaps if he had not been rich she might not have relinquished Tom Garvice so readily, for Tom did make a good living and one would never starve or freeze with him, even though his saintly goodness might bore one to death. But, Norris was rich, as it happened, and that made all the difference.

Aware that she was no longer alone on the platform, she allowed her eyelids to flutter open. A tall heavy man was seated beside her, his face half turned way, one pale wide hand grasping the knee nearest her. That hand drew her attention like a magnet for, on the small finger, half imbedded in the soft flesh was a ring that she had seen too often not to know.

Her eyes flew upward to the still profile.

It was blurred with flesh and oddly sagged from the firmness that she remembered. The eye looked heavily from its encircling pouch and the mouth—Mildred deducted from it more than anything that this was—her well-remembered Norris.

The foppish clothes fitted his generous curves too frankly, but Mildred could see that they fairly reeked of money. She caught the blaze of an enormous diamond and her surprised disappointment merged into a different feeling.

The train lurched around a curve and their chairs slid toward each other enough so that he looked up. Mildred, all ready with a dazzling smile, saw that the indifferent weary eye fell upon her and away again without a trace of recognition.

Very well, then, she would not discover herself just yet. Poor man, he must be train-sick or something to look so jaundiced in the very teeth of a pretty woman. Mildred usually said beautiful when she described herself, but she was in too hilariously amused a mood to be particular over a little matter like degrees just then. How perfectly daring of her good fairy to deliver Norris into the very palm of her hand like this! Could anything be more ridiculously easy or appropriate or convenient?

"My dear Mr. Collins," she cooed. "I'm afraid your memory isn't exactly all that it might be."

His eyes turned slowly back to her.

"No, it is not," he agreed without haste and seemingly quite without interest.

Mildred formed her red lips into a pout. "Oh, Norris!"

She put a world of tender significance into her tone.

It was his turn to smile, and he did it with a sort of tired good nature that was not at all like the man of her dreams but which was far better than the blankness of a minute ago.

"Pretty lady, how can I forgive you

for having the advantage of me?"

Mildred's confident heart leaped exultantly—how her beauty must have flowered during the years to afford this sumptuous disguise.

"Forgive?" she rippled and took off her gloves. "It's I that am going to do that. Fancy your not recognizing me! I've a good mind to make you guess just to punish you."

"I never could. And besides, it's so hot." Collins frowned a trifle impatiently out at the hot wastes sliding by on both sides of them and pulled a magazine out of his pocket.

Spoiled as ever, Mildred reflected, too lazy to guess; entirely confident that she would tell him. Well, she would not. Not at once anyhow. She stifled the irritation that pricked her at the sight of that magazine produced at this of all junctures in the world, just in the manner that Tom used to unfold a newspaper.

She put her hand lightly on his knee.

"Norris, do you know it's fifteen years since I left Los Angeles?"

"No. Is it?"

"Fifteen years and they have seemed like so many centuries to me."

"You are married, I see." One of his white puffy fingers touched the slender gold circlet and passed negligently across the back of her hand.

"It was all a terrible mistake," she said tragically.

"That's too bad. So many marriages are that sometimes I think of suggesting a law against them,"—Collins spoke humorously.

Mildred perceived that he was best pleased by a light note and she brightened as she laughed,

"But luckily there's always divorce and I'm quite free now."

"Ah."

She waited for more, but as it did not come went on. "So, I'm going back to Los Angeles. My heart has always been there, and oh, how I have loved the memory of it and the good times we used to have."

She could see that he was wondering whether those good times had included himself; that he did not recognize her even yet.

"'You know, Norris, once upon a time I was a poor little office slave and a certain great, big prince saw me and took pity on me, and when all the dreadful ogres in the world were asleep or looking the other way he used to take me on little journeys to—"

Mildred stopped. Two words more and she would enter upon her empire. Collins's direct gaze was upon her as she added slowly in a half whisper that he had to lean close to hear above the rattle of the flying train — "Spanish Paradise."

Collins simply looked mystified. No light broke over his flabby face, that looked almost more than middle aged. He had forgotten their whimsical name for their ancient retreat! The unbelievable truth almost staggered her, but she rallied her scattering forces and hurried on with an uneasy foreboding that she did not attempt to name. She described this Paradise; the keeper of its portals; a certain narrow escape from discovery; a dozen incidents that in her years with Tom Garvice she had re-lived until they were more vivid in her mind than the daily happenings around her.

Collins shook his head.

"Fifteen years is a long time ago, Girlie," he remarked, and fluttered the leaves of his magazine.

"You used to call me Cherry-Blossom," she said chokingly, her pale blue eyes big with the terror inside her shallow breast, their rims too pink from the flying dust.

He made a vague gesture implying that it might truly be and still signify nothing.

"Are you sure you haven't mistaken me for someone else, pretty lady? I'm Collins of the Norris-Blake branch of the family."

His gaze traveled lazily over her, and for the first time in her life Mildred felt that her clothes were too vivid. She felt cheap, insignificant, aware that she had said enough to change respect for her outward seeming into something

like contempt for a woman who hinted at an illicit relation in the past.

"No! I'm not mistaken. I used to be your stenographer! I'm Mildred! There, I've been and told you!" She laughed and clasped her hands in the childish way he used to swear was adorable, and tilted her head on one side—"Mildred Ellerson, who went away to Ohio and stayed there three years and then married and repented for twelve more; got a divorce and then a ticket to California. Who's never forgotten home nor her first big, darling sweetheart, who taught her the meaning of life. To think I should be sitting here dreaming of the day when I'd see you again and you come and sit down beside me!"

She put her handkerchief to her eyes and then her lips. A spot of rouge showed on it and she hastily folded it in, aware that Collins had seen it too. There was amusement in his face, and before it she could not go on as she had intended. To stir his sense of humor and not his heart!

"I don't seem to recall the name," he said finally.

Her desperate searching gaze uncovered no sign of a desire to deceive, but found the harshest of critics looking out of his dull eyes at her fading hair, the fine lines about mouth and eyes, the slenderness that truth, smothered for so long, now shouted above the din of her collapsing universe, as merely gauntness.

"Oh, Norris," she faltered, "have you forgotten the time we went to San Gabriel and the mocking bird sang out in the moonlight?" She threw the last shred of pride away, "Do you remember—"

The torrent of words was stilled by something in his face that told her that doubtless a multitude of her sisters might conjure up just such scenes; that the scroll of his jaded mind must be written close with such records, none varying from the other very much, the recent records totally obliterating the older ones by their very similarity. Honestly he knitted his brows exploring the limbo of forgotten days.

There was a sullen stunned silence in her soul. So much, seemingly, for the past where stretched the miserable years that she had turned into hell for poor Tom and lived herself in a fool's dishonest dreams. For the present, nothing, since she was not lovely in his eyes. For the future nothing, for, divorced, she had cut herself away from Tom and easy security forever.

"No," Collins was saying, "I don't remember you."

She turned her head away and he got up with a little portly grunt, scraped his chair across the gritty floor and went inside.



A WOMAN is glad to be twenty, ashamed to be forty, sorry to be sixty, and proud to be eighty.



ALL'S fair in love, unless you happen to prefer brunettes.



ENCHANTERS OF MEN

V

A Queen of Seductions

By Thornton Hall

NINON DE LENCLOS' beautiful body has been dust these two centuries, but her name still has a magic to stir the pulses of men and to rouse the envy and rivalry of women. It brings with it a waft of perfume, sweet, delicate and elusive; and conjures up a picture of one of the daintiest, gayest, most irresistible and irresponsible of all the women who have made playthings of the hearts of men while keeping their own inviolate.

Her name is still the very synonym for beauty, as it was when the seventeenth century was young; and today lovely women enhance their charms with "Ninon" Bloom and Cream and Powder, as they vainly sought to rival her fascinations in the long-gone days when she walked among them a proud and unrivalled Queen.

And now as then, no one can claim to understand her. She was an inscrutable problem in her own time; her charms defied description, as her complex and contradictory character eluded analysis. She was then, and will ever, remain an enigma.

The most seductive of women, her greatest ambition was to be a "man." She herself declared:

I saw, as soon as I began to reflect, that our sex has been burdened with all that is frivolous, and that men have reserved to themselves the right to the essential things and qualities. From that moment I resolved to make myself a man."

The envy and despair of her own sex, she never scrupled to betray its weaknesses to the very men whom she enslaved by their exercise.

The child of an austerely pious mother, she scoffed at religion; to the meretricious arts of the courtesan, she allied gifts and graces of mind to which the greatest intellects in France paid homage; and to her last day she made a mockery of all that women should hold most sacred, as when she laughingly declared to Fontenelle:

"You know what I have done with my body. Well, I could have sold my soul still more profitably. The Jesuits and Jansenists both wanted it."

It was on a November day in the year 1620 that Ninon de Lenclos made her entry on the stage of life, on which she was destined to play such brilliant and romantic rôles; and she was the daughter of strangely contrasted parents. Her father, we are told, was "voluptuous and addicted to the pleasures of the table." He was, in fact, a devotee of pleasure, in its most alluring and least creditable forms, a man whose amours and excesses generally were a scandal to all who knew him, and whose only redeeming quality appears to have been his skill on the lute, a talent which, with his vices, he transmitted to his daughter Anne—otherwise "Ninon," the irrelevant French diminutive of that austere name.

Her mother was Marie Barbe de la Marche, "uninteresting, plain, devout and retiring," a woman who spent her days in masses and prayers and in the company of devotional books, while her husband was revelling with his boon companions of both sexes.

Both parents were equally devoted to their clever, beautiful, self-willed child; each sought to lead her by widely divergent roads. But all Madame's efforts to train her in ways of goodness failed lamentably; they only seemed to rouse in her a wild spirit of rebellion; and, at thirteen we are told "Ninon was blaspheming brilliantly." She shocked her circle in Passion Week by a cynical quotation from a popular Spanish song of the moment; and when Madame called in a priest to lecture her, the child laughed in his face and declared that "religion was all imagination—not a word of it was true." And from this position she never retreated to the last defiant year of her life, when she declared:

"A person who needs the help of religion to get through life is much to be pitied. It is a certain sign, either of lacking intelligence or of a very corrupt heart."

She would fling away the good books Madame offered for her reading; and would rush out of the room, dancing and singing some low song from the cabarets which her father had taught her. She refused point-blank to accompany her mother to church, and loved to horrify her by turning her piety into ridicule.

Thus Ninon grew to lovely young womanhood, imbibing her father's vices and scorning her mother's virtues. At ten, we are told, she was saturated with the heresies and lax morality of Montaigne; she played the lute and danced the saraband with the witchery of a consummate artiste; she dazzled all by her wit and epigrams, while shocking them by her disregard of decency; and while she revelled in the society of men, she showed that contempt of her sex which she carried through her long life.

It is little surprise to learn that a girl so precocious and defiant of the proprieties had a lover before she saw her sixteenth birthday—a handsome, rakish army captain, one Saint Etienne, who paid assiduous court to the fascinating schoolgirl. But Ninon soon grew weary of her cavalier of the empty purse, and had no scruple in giving him his *congé* when Cardinal Richelieu, then at the zenith of his power and splendour, set covetous eyes on her and offered to take her under his protection. Between the poor cavalry officer and the all-powerful Cardinal, there could be no question of choice; and Ninon was quick to transfer her affection to the man who, though older than her own father, was the greatest in all Europe.

Thus early we find Ninon launched on the career of so-called pleasure which she meant to be hers through life, so effective had been her father's pernicious teaching and example. Meanwhile Monsieur Lenclos had crowned his rascally career by the murder of Baron de Chabans, and was a fugitive from justice, with a heavy price on his head, and no doubt Ninon was glad to escape from the sighs and prayers and reproaches of her mother to the luxury that would be hers as the Cardinal's favorite.

But even Richelieu could not long hold such a butterfly of pleasure; and when, in 1641, Lenclos came back to France to die, he found his daughter surrounded by a small army of lovers, whom she cynically grouped in three classes—the "payers," whom she cared nothing for, and only made use of until she could discard them; the "martrys," and the "favorites."

Although his own career of vice was run, and he must have realized its folly and its vanity, Monsieur declared himself delighted at the success with which his daughter was following in his footsteps; and with his dyng breath gave her this advice—"Be scrupulous only in the *choice* of your pleasures—never mind about the number"—advice which Ninon scarcely required, for no woman was less disposed to quarrel with the number of her admirers, or more careful in making their selection minister to her pleasure.

Thus at twenty we find Ninon embarked on the career of conquest which she was to pursue for half a century, carrying her fascinations into her old

age, and captivating hearts a generation after her loveliest rivals had abandoned the lists of love. The last frail barrier between her and the fullest licence was now her pious mother; and when Madame de Lenclos followed her husband to the grave three years later, Ninon was her own absolute mistress, free to fashion her life as she would. Her fortune, it is true, was small; but it sufficed to supply her with all reasonable luxury, and left her free to pick and choose among her lovers, without any care for the gold her favors could command.

"Her love of liberty," one of her chroniclers tells us, "forbade her to think of marriage."

And thus, *femme emancipée* if ever there was one, Mademoiselle Ninon began her independent career.

II

For "love" this strange woman always professed an indifference, even a contempt.

"Do you know," she cynically wrote to the Marquis de Sevigné, "do you know why love is dangerous? Because people will persist in thinking it sublime."

She considered it a "transitory state," founded on an illusion of the senses.

"Love is a passion, not a virtue," she declared; "and a passion does not turn into a virtue because it happens to last—it merely becomes a longer passion."

"Love is powerful only because we are feeble."

"It is almost always the work of vanity—scarcely ever of a so-called invincible sympathy."

"Flight, time, absence; these are remedies which no passion has ever been known to resist."

In such contemptuous strain Ninon always wrote and spoke of the "divine passion."

One can scarcely wonder that she should gibe thus at love, for she never knew it. For her it was ever a will-o'-the-wisp that always eluded her, dowered though she was, more than any other woman of her time, with the gifts that ought to have captured it. Thus to her it was ever an illusion, an unreality. Of the "transitory state," at any rate, she had plenty of experience. Ninon, in fact, as someone once wrote satirically for her epitaph, "had too many lovers to know love."

A woman so richly dowered with beauty could indeed never lack lovers. Contemporary poets vied with each other to sing her charms in verse; painters were driven to despair in their attempts to picture them on canvas. Her portraits show us a face of singular beauty—of perfect oval, illuminated by large, brilliant eyes, in which lurks a strange magnetism; with delicately arched eyebrows, an exquisitely modelled nose, and a sweet rosebud mouth. She had, too, a "skin of dazzling fairness, a figure faultless in its curved symmetry, and with grace in all its movements."

But one is conscious that no mere catalogue of her physical charms can explain the spell Ninon de Lenclos cast over men. Beyond and apart from them all, there was that curious feminine witchery which is more powerful than any beauty of face or figure, and which it is as impossible to define as to resist. And to this were allied a voice of caressing sweetness, a sparkling wit, and a brilliant conversational gift which could range over all subjects from theology to the theater, and which held the cleverest men in thrall.

Probably no woman ever had a larger circle of adoring friends—many of them the greatest intellectuals of the day.

"You are of all countries," Saint Evrémond, her life-long slave, wrote to her when she had passed middle age. "You are as much honoured in London as in Paris. You are of all time—for when I bring your name forward to glorify my own, I find the young men quoting you to prove the superiority of theirs. So there you are, you see—mistress of the present and the past."

"All that she thought was well thought," declares another; "all that

she has said, well said; all that she did, well done."

While a third of her legion of intellectual courtiers, wrote—"When one has a mind like hers, one belongs to all time."

It is indeed small wonder that a woman so rarely dowered in mind as well as beauty should never lack a retinue of lovers. For fifty years, indeed, they pass before our eyes in bewildering succession. When she wearies of Richelieu's senile wooing, she flies from the Church to the arms of Mars, when the great Condé comes as a suppliant to her feet. But Condé, great soldier as he was, proved himself but a poor lover; and she reproaches him for his cold and clumsy wooing by assuring him that "it requires far more genius to make love than to command armies."

Fortunately for Condé's feelings, Ninon fell dangerously ill, which cut short their affair without wounding explanations. She convalesced in the company of the Chevalier de Jarsay, whom she in turn dismissed in favour of the Duc de Noailles, of whom the following amusing story is told:

One day Ninon caught sight of the Duc when she was driving, and sent to say she would like to speak to him. He hurried up and she swept him off in her carriage to supper *á deux;* and when the feast was over conducted him to a guest-chamber. No sooner, however, was the Duc's head on his pillow than he instantly forgot all about his charming hostess in a deep slumber, from which he never awoke until late the following morning, when his door was flung noisily open, and his still sleepy eyes fell on a gaily dressed cavalier.

"Ah, Sir," he exclaimed, as he sat hurriedly up in bed, "I am a man of honour; I will give you satisfaction."

And it was only when Ninon's mocking laughter rippled out that he recognized in the intruder the lady whose vanity he had so outraged. Needless to say, that was the last time the Duc was Madame's guest.

Thus Ninon's variegated lovers pass in review before us. After the Duc, trip that bourgeois couple, Fourreau and Moreau, "payers" both of them—men who were proud to barter their commercial gold for the favor of the loveliest and most exclusive lady in all France.

But Moreau and Fourreau, like all Ninon's "payers," were unromantic lovers, from whom she gladly parted when she had made a sufficient raid on their exchequers. Then we find the handsome and graceless D'Andelot installed as first favorite, until to her amazement he had the audacity to leave her for the smiles of a fair rival—the only man among all her lovers who had not had the elementary courtesy to wait until he was dismissed. And it was in her pique at this cavalier treatment that she consented to dally for a time with Miossens, a dull dog whose involved speeches and ponderous attempts at lovemaking so puzzled her that she declared life was too short to understand them or him.

Ninon was quite honest in her dealings with her many admirers. When she was tired of them, she told them so quite frankly; but while her fancy lasted no one saw her but the favored man—"except at supper, where people went for conversation."

In the wake of Miossens trips Des Yveteux, gayest and most incorrigible of roués, who, it is said, died to the music of a saraband "so that my soul may go happily," clasping in his rigid fingers a yellow ribbon which she had given him as a *gage d'amour.*

Thus the lovers pass in bewildering sequence until the Marquis de Villarceaux steps on the stage—to hold it, to the amazement of all, for three long years. Even Ninon herself wonders at the marvel.

"Such constancy," she wrote, "really alarms me. Is it possible that some day I shall settle down to the dull decorum of wedded life? Never!" she vows. "I am wedded to liberty; and no other's bride will I be."

For the Marquis's sake she actually left her beloved Paris to spend a few

months with him in the rural seclusion of Yvetot. And when, at last, in response to the pleading of Saint-Evrémond, she returned to the capital, Villarceaux followed quickly and established himself in a house opposite hers.

"He proved troublesome," we read,—"—used to watch her windows; and once, seeing them lit up very late, sent to ask if she was ill. They told him no. 'Then she must be writing to a lover,' he decided, and went across to see her; but, so unstrung was he at the thought, that he took up a silver ewer, instead of a hat, crammed it on his head and had great difficulty in extricating himself."

So touched was Ninon by this ludicrous evidence of devotion that she took him into favor again—for a week.

III

So the gay, careless years passed for Ninon de Lenclos—years of unbridled pursuit of pleasure, in which she changed her lovers as lightly as her gowns; and, while revelling in the conquest of men, enjoyed at least as much the discomfiture of her rivals. Of her own sex, this epitome of all its charms and frailties was merciless in her contempt.

"I tell you," she once proclaimed to her masculine court, "and I speak for all women, that there are moments when they would rather be *brusquées* than treated with too much respect. Men lose more conquests by their own awkwardness than by any virtue in the woman."

"A woman's resistance," according to Ninon, "is no proof of her virtue; it is much more likely to be a proof of her experience. If we spoke sincerely, we should have to confess that our first impulse is to yield—we only resist on reflection."

"We never talk of 'Fate' except when we've made a bad choice. How arrogant we are, to be sure! We assign to Nature all the blame for a misplaced passion, and do our own judgment all the honour of a successful one."

"Men often say that they want the 'essential qualities' in a love-affair. How miserable they would be if they got them!"

"A woman's virtue is only for show."

Such is the strain of cynicism in which Ninon always wrote and spoke of her own sex; and, however false her indictments may be when directed at women in general, she at least illustrated them in her own person.

Saint-Evrémond's letters to Ninon are eloquent of her unrivalled queendom over the hearts of men. In one letter he wrote:

"You have been loved by the best fellows in the world, and you have loved them just long enough to leave nothing in the way of passion untasted, and so wisely as to avoid any of the lassitudes of a waning love. None of your sex has ever before been so fortunate; there are few princesses in the world who would not envy you — probably many a saint would be glad to exchange her tranquillity of mind for your delightful anxieties. The only torments you have known are those of love—and who knows better than you that they are the best part of it?"

He sings her praises as an *amoureuse;* indeed, until one wearies of the refrain—"You were born to love all your life. Lovers and gamblers have a sort of resemblance in that way—he who has loved, will love."

When Ninon had passed her fiftieth birthday she seems to have been at the zenith of her career of pleasure; and it is of this period, when her own sons had long entered the arena of love, that the following story is told:

Among the many gallants who flocked to her *salon* was the Chevalier de Villars, a handsome young man, little more than a boy, who was quick to succumb to the fascination of his middle-aged hostess.

He made passionate love to her, vowed that he could not live without her affection; and the more coldly she received his advances, the more desperate became his pleading. Ninon was

in despair. Never was woman placed in so cruel a position. In her distress she sent for her old lover, the Chevalier de Jarsay, and asked him, with tears streaming down her cheeks, "*Must* I tell him who he is?" The Chevalier saw no other escape from the dilemma. A few hours later, when her youthful lover was again at her feet, beseeching her to take pity on him, she placed her hand on his head and gasped out, "Hush! oh, hush! *I am your mother!*"

The Chevalier rose from his knees, fixed his eyes on her with a look of unutterable horror and pain, and then rushed from the room. A minute later a shot rang out. Ninon's boy-lover was dead.

IV

The delightful house in the Rue de Tournelles in which Ninon had now made her home was filled with the flower of the fashionable world. The greatest men in France flocked there to pay homage to the "Queen of Beauty and of Wisdom." Charléval and Molière, Boileau and La Rochefoucauld vied with each other to win approving smiles by their wit and flatteries. When La Rochefoucauld declared that "The woman's hell is old age," Saint-Evrémond, like the courtier and lover he was, retorted:

"*Your* life, my dear lady, has been too illustrious to lose any of its glory in the end. Don't be afraid of Rochefoucauld's 'hell'; it is a made-up one—he just wanted to perpetrate a maxim. You take my advice and say 'Love' boldly all the time, and never let the words 'Old age' soil your lips."

"The most virtuous mothers were anxious for their sons to go there," we are told; "for it was regarded as the centre of good society." Christina, Sweden's vagrant and erratic Queen, was among the most enthusiastic of Ninon's guests, and was so enchanted that she proposed to cart her off to Sweden, an offer which Ninon politely refused. And Madame Sevigné was proud to attend her Court, although Ninon counted both her husband and her son among her lovers.

For years this miniature palace in the Rue des Tournelles, with its boudoir decorated with Cupids, its salon with the gorgeously painted ceiling, on which the "Sun-King" masqueraded as Apollo, and its rose-bowered garden, was the Mecca of the rank, beauty and wit, not only of France but of Europe. Her banquets were the despair of epicures; nowhere else could such ravishing music, such brilliant conversation be heard; in no Royal Court had a Queen such adoring subjects.

Thus Ninon carried her Queendom through the brilliant years, long after the rivals of her youth had passed into obscurity. Time seemed powerless to touch her beauty or to dim the lustre of her allurements. At sixty she brought to her feet men whose fathers had been her lovers a generation earlier. At seventy, two boys who had not been cradled until she had reached middle age fought a duel to the death in rivalry for her smiles; and Saint-Evrémond, who had been her slave for fifty years, wrote to her:

"To you alone among women it has been given to solve the secret of perpetual youth. How the 'scythe-bearer' must gnash his teeth at his impotence to touch the beauty and charm that you have carried so long and so triumphantly through life."

Even when at last old age had robbed Ninon of much of the beauty that had wrought such havoc with the hearts of men, she lost none of her desire and little of her power to charm. "Cupid," to quote the Abbé Charlieu, "had retreated into the little wrinkles round her eyes"; but he was there, and as disposed to mischief as when, more than sixty years earlier, he first sped his arrows of conquest.

On the verge of eighty she was still practising her arts of coquetry and receiving the homage of admirers young enough to be her grandsons. One of them, it is said, she kept waiting for her smile of approval until a certain day,

"because it was her eightieth birthday, and she wanted to boast of having a new lover on it."

Thus Ninon coquetted with love almost to the very brink of the grave; and it was only when Death's hand was beckoning to her that she said, a little wearily, "I am tired—tired of always doing the same thing." But even Death had no terrors for the old woman of the ever young and brave heart, who could say with a smile on her face and with her last breath, "How sweet it will be to talk with my old friends—over there!"

The sixth article in this series, entitled "The Tailor's Daughter Who Enslaved Three Dukes," will appear in the next number of THE SMART SET.



TRYST

By Martha McCulloch-Williams

SOME windy morning full of sun,
And greening grass and breaking buds,
With waters singing as they run,
And calling doves in all the woods,
When blue and blurred our mountain shows,
Seamed with the upward-coiling track
And silver-still our river flows—
Will you come back?

Some windy morning, deadly chill,
With pelting hail and stinging sleet,
Ice fetters fast on every rill,
And earth in pale cold winding sheet,
When fanged airs with edge of steel
Rave, tearing trails of woe and wrack,
While piteous praying mothers kneel—
Will you come back?

. . . . . .

I know you loved the April sun,
I know you loved November mist—
Here am I blind—as one must be
Who, with a ghost, shall keep her tryst.



A DIPLOMAT is a man who remembers a lady's birthday but forgets her age.



THE MESSAGE

By Roubaix de l'Abrie-Richey

THE Count, having finished writing, yawned wearily and rang. Immediately an orderly entered and saluted. This orderly was a tall young man with blue eyes, who made a handsome figure in his tightly buttoned coat and shining puttees. He stood at attention while the Count folded the message, placed it in a large square envelope, and sealing it with his signet ring, which he pressed hurriedly into the warm wax, handed it to him.

The orderly took the envelope, and saluting once more, dashed down the steps. He halted there, blinking a moment after coming from the bright room into the dimly-lighted yard. A cold mist was beginning to fall; obscuring the feeble lamps, but there was no sound. The orderly went towards his waiting horse and springing into the saddle rode down the drive through the iron gates, past the sentry boxes and into the boulevard.

The streets seemed deserted. His horse's hoof awoke hollow echoes as he clattered over the slimy pavement between the silent houses. On reaching the square he turned sharply to the right and rode in the direction of the river. On and on he went. Two drunken old roisterers were staggering in a gutter. He saw no one else. In a few minutes now he would turn to the left again, thread his way through a narrow, tree-lined street and swing into the avenue that led over the bridge. He spurred on faster.

Rounding the corner suddenly he caught sight of some dark figures moving in the street before him. The horse sprang to the curb, rearing with fright. The orderly swung his mount around on his haunches, but too late. A quick hand seized the bridle. A cry was raised. Someone came running with a torch. It showed him a sea of dark, threatening faces that suddenly surged up about him.

"Give us the dispatches!" they cried. "We want the dispatches!"

The rider looked at the man who held his bridle. He was tall like himself and fair. He seemed to be their leader. For a moment they remained gazing into one another's eyes.

"Give us the message," said the man on the ground in front of him, "give them to us and you may go."

The rider put his hand into his breast. Drawing out a small pistol with a deft movement of his hand, he fired full into the other's face, and the horse springing forward dashed over him. The horse made three bounds and had almost reached the turning before the maddened crowd could throw themselves upon him. He emptied his pistol and drew his saber and several fell before they dragged him from the saddle and trampled him in their fury.

From the tattered coat they drew out the large envelope with the red wax seal. It was crumpled and soaked with blood but still legible under the torches.

They read:

My Darling—

A thousand kisses. I think of you always. . . .

IN THE DARK

By Paul Hervey Fox

I

THE visitor, according to the maid, did not choose to give his name, and Gloria rose with a slight stir of perplexity.

It was a very different emotion that possessed her when she saw the person who was advancing towards her across the long, handsome living-room of her husband's country house at Westmore.

The man who had presented himself anonymously was a short, blunt figure wearing an air of cultivated aggression. His sunken eyes were pale and nebulous, but in their intensity they appeared to burn. He had harsh, twisted lips, and a head that was square and uncouth in its outlines.

To a casual eye there was nothing in that mere ungainly aspect that should have caused Gloria Trench to catch her breath, lift her hand unconsciously in a gesture of fear, and feel sickeningly that her voice had deserted her.

Yet she was staring at him hypnotically, and to break the spell she closed her eyes. In the instant before they flickered open again, she saw once more that picture from the past which she had torn out of her mind only by a directed and indomitable effort of will. . . .

Seven years ago! A quiet night had settled down upon a village in West Virginia. In the main room of a flimsy cottage that stood alone upon the high-road an oil lamp threw a dull, morose yellow upon drab walls and dilapidated furnishings.

Before one of the windows, peering out at the lonely reaches of farmland, somber in the blackness, stood a girl with a thick, loosened mane of tawny hair. Her attitude was tense and her mind far away from the vista before her eyes.

She was listening to the confused mutter of noise that came from a room above. Each thin, low vibration was vivid and terrifying to her. The sound of a man's voice growling vaguely to himself, the high-pitched clatter of a fallen glass, the stumble for its recovery, and then the continuance of the low growling voice were minutiæ that she caught with painful keenness.

All day long it had been going on, steadily, quietly growing worse. And one day was now like another. There was no hope, no chance, none whatever.

She turned away from the window with a nervous movement to realize that she had completely forgotten the presence of her caller. Abraham Storch was sitting in a low chair, watching her with his fanatic, rigid head thrust slightly upwards and forwards. He was the travelling and self-ordained preacher to the dozen hamlets of the region, motivated by some obscure and self-righteous austerity.

He rose suddenly to his feet.

"I must go," he said. "I exhort you to put your faith in the Lord. Oh, miserable sinner that is man, his ways are evil and his heart impure!" He rolled his eyes sanctimoniously upward.

His singsong voice had a peculiarly ugly and rasping note. His accent was illiterate, and he delivered his words with a manner of violent bigotry.

There was no help here, no sympathy from this dour and bitter nature

for Gloria O'Malley. Yet somehow his presence was in itself comforting, the presence of some other human to help her forget her fear and loathing of the brute upstairs, the brute who was her husband.

She opened her lips to detain Storch and, as she did so, the crash of an overturned table in the room above paralyzed her utterance. She waited, listening, her breath coming hard. Listening, too, Storch stared at her with his gleaming, sunken eyes.

In the space that followed the sound of lumbering, awkward footfalls descending the stairs came to their ears. Then the huge figure of Glenton O'Malley appeared, wavering unsteadily in the aperture of the doorway. His red beard took a streaked, sinister colour from the light. His heavy, handsome face, set upon a magnificent pair of shoulders, wore the unmistakable signs of drink.

He slouched into the room, following the outlines of the walls, and threw himself into a wide chair in the farther corner. A meaningless grin whipped suddenly from his face.

"What—what are you looking at me—looking at me like that for?" he said slowly. "You're my wife, Glory, hey? Hey?"

At his reiterated query she made a low, unintelligible sound of assent. He continued in his halting, ponderous voice.

"You think I'm drunk. Damn you, you do! Well . . . well, maybe I am!"

He broke off with a silly chuckle, wagging his lowered head. When he glanced up his gaze fell upon Storch.

"Hullo, a newcomer? How'd you get in? The parson, hey? Well, I don't want any parsons around here. Get out!"

"The devil has you, Glenton O'Malley, body and soul! You shall go down to the fiery furnace, to the eternal torments!"

Abraham Storch, ignoring Gloria's hand thrust up in terror and restraint, stared into the eyes of the other man.

O'Malley's brow broke into frowning wrinkles, his lips twitched with rage, and then suddenly his face cleared and he gave way to an inane laughter. His head bowed down towards his knees and his body shook loosely.

There was a minute of silence. The next instant his head went up again and, with a scowl, he lurched clumsily to his feet.

"You whining nigger!" he roared. "What was that you said to me? Did you hear me tell you to clear out? Did you hear me? What are you doing here with my wife, my wife Glory? You psalm-singing dog, I'll—I'll—"

His fumbling fingers explored the pocket of a loose coat. They came out with a jerk. O'Malley deliberately directed the barrel of an old-fashioned military revolver at the fanatic, and his finger closed upon the trigger.

There was a quick cry, the flash of a woman's arm, and the revolver flew in an aimless arc to the floor.

Glenton O'Malley turned with a muffled, choking sound. In an instant he had caught up a chair and sent it hurtling at her. She pressed close to the wall, and it flew past, bringing down the lamp with a sudden clatter and plunging the room into darkness.

With an oath O'Malley lunged in her direction. She could discern the great bulk of his figure like a grey silhouette. She fled to the table and, groping there, found and unsheathed a long hunting-knife. The next instant O'Malley's arms were about her, crushing her. With his hot, reeking breath against her face, she fought to free herself. Suddenly she heard him gasp, and in the darkness perceived that two hands were tightening about his throat from behind. He staggered backwards under the clutch, and as he did so the woman, in the madness and hatred that had possessed her, lifted the sheath-knife. With her eyes shut tight, she drove it smoothly home. . . .

After that there seemed to fall a silence, a mysterious and dreadful silence, accented by the sound of something dripping monotonously and delicately,

and by the hard breathing of a man and a woman who faced each other across a huddled mass upon the floor.

It was the woman who found her voice first.

"You must go," she said in a whisper, as though fearful of disturbing the shape by her feet. "You must tell them in the village that I have murdered my husband."

The voice of Abraham Storch was hoarse and trembling.

"No, no! Not that. I helped you, too. It was murder. But in self-defence. We are not guilty. But—but—wait! You must not tell them."

"Why not?" she asked slowly.

She seemed to be in a vague lethargy. Everything was so very far away, everything so indistinct. Something very terrible had happened. It was difficult to remember. Something had happened.

Then she heard Abraham Storch speaking in his raspy, broken voice:

"We must not tell them. Say that a nigger attacked you. Your husband—they fought—he was killed. That is best. . . . I am afraid. I did not mean to. . . . Oh, God, oh, God, have pity; have mercy upon me! I have endeavored to serve thee, oh, Lord!"

He began to sob. With something like a dull curiosity Gloria noted that under that harsh and bigotted aggression was only a pitiable cowardice.

"Go, then," she said wearily. "I will do as you say. I do not know. It does not matter."

She heard him shuffle to the door, open it, and very cautiously close it. She stood alone in the darkness and the silence and for a long time she did not move. . . .

* * *

That was seven years ago. And now, many miles away, as Mrs. George Trench, she was staring across the handsome living-room of her husband's country house at Westmore at the grotesque and unforgotten figure of Abraham Storch.

II

"I HAVE searched for you in many places and for long months. The Lord in his wisdom has guided me to you at last."

Gloria found her voice laboredly.

"Yes?" she said. "What—what is it you want?"

The fanatic leaned forward in the chair he had taken and his fingers curved into a grip upon the arms.

"Confess!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "Confess, I say to you, that your sin may be forgiven."

She put her hand up to her eyes with an absent, graceful gesture.

"I don't understand. I don't see—"

He waved aside her stumbling sentences. He spoke rapidly, more shrilly.

"No; but I see! I have been delivered to the torments for seven years. I have known no happiness, no peace. Satan blinded my eyes that I might not discover the path to repentance and salvation. You took a life that was the merciful Lord's, and I aided you. Confess before it is too late. Stand before the world and let the world judge the sin."

"Now?" Gloria exclaimed incredulously. "You and I have paid in full for what happened that night. And besides, it was justice, justice! We were defending ourselves. He would have killed us. Any court would acquit us. I wanted to tell the truth at the time. But you would not let me. And I cannot now. It is impossible, mad!"

"Why not now?" came the harsh-voiced query. "Cast out the devil's counsels from your heart!"

"Then—it would have been different. I had nothing to lose by the truth. Now I have my position, my place in the sun that I have fought for, desired so terribly, bought by prayer and hope and anxiety. My husband, my friends, would suffer now as well as I."

"What are they compared to the word of your own conscience?"

"You don't realize," she answered excitedly. "How can I make you understand? It was horrible to me. For

months I did not sleep. But never, never for an instant, had I any doubt that you and I did right. It was in self-defense. He would have killed us. I know what he was. Only once before had I ever opposed him when he was like that. And I know what he was! He would have killed both of us!"

"You hold within you the seeds of evil. You hide from yourself God's awful word! It is for his appointed judges on earth to say whether you are guiltless."

Gloria Trench lifted her hand dramatically. "Why can't you see? You follow a code, and put your faith in a machine. Ours was the real justice. You argue for conventions with the blind belief that God is responsible for them." She halted suddenly in perplexity. "You ask me to confess, to break up my home and happiness, merely to receive the same verdict from the world which my conscience has already given me. But why is it that you ask *me* to do it?"

He bent forward and covered his face with his hands.

"I cannot," he whimpered. "I dare not. You must, for I cannot! My life has been ruined. I cannot preach the Lord's word with this deadly sin upon my heart. There is no hope save by public atonement. Often I have brought myself to the very point of confession and failed. Only you can save me. And you must. You shall! With the last strength of will that is in me, I demand that you do what I dare not do. And if you fail, I warn you that there are still other ways."

He rose to his feet, and when he spoke again his voice was calmer. "I will leave you now to think upon what I have said. If within three days you have not confessed, I know a worse method."

"I will never confess!" Gloria cried, gazing at his drawn, intense face, and then, as she saw him moving to the door and saw with him all her hope and joy retreating from her forever, she added in a panic: "Wait!"

He turned, and she fought to think, to gain time, to find some solution.

"Stay here. Have dinner and meet my husband. Stay tonight. We must talk first. I—I may be made to see your point after all."

His eyes were bright and hard.

"Now I know that you are lying to me. You will attempt to divert me from my purpose. It was useless to see you. You do not mean to confess. But I will stay as you suggest. I am prepared. Perhaps you will have wished later that you had let me go."

Abraham Storch noted that her expression had oddly changed. He turned to find that a man, tall and pleasant-faced, had just entered the room.

"Do you know my husband—this is an old friend of mine from Virginia," she faltered, with the fanatic's vaguely terrifying threat still ringing in her ears.

III

DINNER that evening was genuinely an ordeal. At times Gloria stopped to wonder at her own power of self-control. She had taken her husband aside and explained the visitor:

"He is an eccentric old preacher whom I used to know. You mustn't mind him, George. He was a very good friend to me once."

George Trench stared curiously at the fanatic several times, but he said nothing, and, apparently, the explanation satisfied him.

But Gloria, with a heightened colour, talked furiously. Under the strain of impending disaster, she brought all her strength and courage to the surface. Her eyes, under the shadow of her tawny hair, betrayed no sign of the fear in her heart. She wondered if she had been wise in asking him to stay. He had threatened her so mysteriously. Did he mean to make some sudden, melodramatic announcement to her husband? And yet if she had let him go she would be bound to meet defeat. This way there was still a chance at least that some plan might come to her mind, some means of saving herself from his cruel and needless bigotry. She noted

the pleasant air of her home more keenly than ever before, and then thought of this crisis which was come to break her peace and shatter her contentment.

After dinner George Trench smoked a cigar with his paper before him. Very quietly Abraham Storch sat watching the woman. She was tense with worry, seeking vaguely some expedient, some idea. But no idea came; her mind was troubled and bewildered as in delirium. If she could only get him alone—

Suddenly she saw that he had risen.

"I am very tired; I should like to retire," he said. Before she could answer he had turned with a curt "Good night," and stepped heavily towards the stairway.

"Odd stick!" ejaculated George Trench, and rustled over his paper to a new page.

Over the rim of it he caught a glance of his wife's distraught face.

"What's the matter, dear? Are you ill?"

"Oh, no. I didn't sleep well last night, I guess. I'm—I'm a little exhausted," Gloria answered with a faint smile.

But her pulses were pounding as she wondered what Abraham Storch was planning. Something in his walk, something in his voice, had plainly signified a definite determination. And yet she could not intercept him without revealing what she was fighting so desperately to keep hidden. She could only wait and hope.

IV

When he had left them, Storch moved quickly in the direction of the room a maid had previously assigned him. He entered in the darkness and shut the door. Then he made his way to a window and for a time stood there lost in thought. Suddenly he sank to his knees and began to pray audibly. Queer scraps of sound echoed in the apartment, a voice of crazed entreaty and despair. At last he got upon his feet and shook his shoulders as if ready for some definite action.

He fumbled along the wall for the switch, but in a moment he fell against a writing-desk in the corner. He went no further, but sat down in the darkness and drew a sheet of paper near him. His fingers closed upon a pen and he uncorked an ink bottle.

Then he began to write. It was only three or four minutes before he threw down his pen and went back to the window. For a moment he stood there silently. The next he gave a little sound of desperation, plunged his hand into his pocket and drew out a small, cylindrical bottle. He tossed the contents into his throat.

As he swayed there, with the poison numbing nerves and heart, a swift spasm of fear came over him. The confession that he had written and left so carelessly—into whose hands would it fall? Some servant who might be bribed, or, perhaps, even the woman herself!

He wheeled about, stumbled and fell. Fighting a deadly nausea, fighting the agony of his aching limbs, he dragged himself inch by inch across the floor. The lines deepened in his face and he wept softly as he battled to carry out his will.

In a minute he had reached the desk, feverishly lifted himself, thrust the confession into a stray envelope and scrawled a superscription upon it: "For the police." Surely a servant would not attempt to tamper with that. His work was done.

With the pen in his fingers, Storch dropped to his knees. With a little tremor the body straightened out and was still.

V

The scream of a horrified maid was not necessary to awaken Gloria. She had not slept all night. When she reached the door, her husband, always an early riser, was already there. On the threshold she threw a single glance within. The stiffened body, the pen

still gripped in the fingers, the envelope on the desk, told the story in full.

If she could only get in quietly and somehow destroy that evidence. But her husband was already there, staring down at the body. Even as she looked she saw his glance rise to the desk and his hand go out towards it.

She closed her eyes and leaned back weakly. And then, as if from very far away, she heard a voice:

"He's written something! See here! What's this? The paper's blank. By Jove, the ink-bottle was empty. He must have written—in the dark!"

Gloria went down to the floor in a faint.



FROM A "GLAD" BOOK.

By Burton Knisely

I

IN the dish were two apples.
One was much the larger and glossier.
Cunningly I picked it.
It was rotten at the bottom.

II

With a submissive half-smile that spoke volumes, I replaced it and took the smaller apple.
It, too, was rotten at the bottom.



A WOMAN is a book written in a dozen languages, and the man who can read them all is called a misogynist.



A GIRL'S kisses are like pickles in a bottle. The first is hard to get, but the rest come easy.



IF you want to know what a woman thinks of this or that, don't listen to her: look at her.



MORALS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

A ONE-ACT PLAY

By Bertram Bloch

THIS is a play about the Lucullus Farringtons. It may be a bit unfair to drag the Lucullus Farringtons into the pitiless glare of publicity—that is, this kind of publicity—and it must be admitted that the reactions to the various events of the story would probably have been the same had these events transpired in the lives of Mr. Cornelius Paramount and his wife, or Lord and Lady Castle, or even, let it be whispered, had they occurred in the lives of Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, which is to say, you and me. But the Fates have chosen the Lucullus Farringtons, and we must abide their choice.

Let us then walk into the glass-enclosed porch of the Farringtons' country home. It is a glorious day, and the warm sunlight is just right for basking. But the Lucullus Farringtons are in no mood for basking this day. There is sterner business before them. . . Mr. Lucullus Farrington is talking. Mr. Lucullus Farrington is a short, spare man with a checked waistcoat and eyebrows so big and fuzzy that they look for all the world like two caterpillars asleep on his forehead. Mrs. Lucullus Farrington, to whom Mr. Lucullus Farrington is talking, is plump, with the benign plumpness of a woman who has never had to worry. She is knitting, but listening intently, nevertheless, for she greatly respects her husband's opinions.

FARRINGTON

(*He is greatly shocked.*) And she remained there from midnight until one in the morning?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*She, too, is shocked, but this only makes her knit the faster.*) Until ten minutes past one. Exactly an hour and ten minutes. Cook had her clock beside her the whole time. Cook is so conscientious.

FARRINGTON

It is outrageous! In a respectable household!

MRS. FARRINGTON

And we have set them such a good example. If we were fast like the Perrys—

FARRINGTON

(*Pointing a forefinger at his wife.*) Haven't I always said that there must be something wrong with Barr? When a chauffeur is as honest and as efficient as he is—look out! It isn't natural, it isn't human. . . But that settles it. I'm through with his kind. I'd rather have a man who'd steal a little, than one who will seduce my maids—

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Shocked.*) Oh, Lucullus!

FARRINGTON

(*Misunderstanding her.*) Yes, I would. Do you think I put money above morals?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Hastening to explain.*) Oh, no,

Lucullus. I was—surprised at your language.

FARRINGTON

I said seduce. Well, isn't it seduction? Don't be a prude, my dear. Not at your time of life. It sounds conceited. . . . (*He waves his arms.*) Have you spoken to either of them yet?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Reproachfully.*) Before speaking to *you*, Lucullus? You know I wouldn't do that. Besides, I'm afraid if we don't speak to them in the right way, they'll leave.

FARRINGTON

(*His eye-brows bobbing up and down as though they were getting ready to jump over his head.*) Leave? Leave! I should hope they *would* leave! The immoral creatures! (*He sees that his wife is not in agreement with him, and he is surprised and shocked.*) My dear! Do you mean to tell me that you want them to stay?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Humbly, but honestly.*) It's easy enough for *you* to talk. *You* don't have the trouble of getting new servants. . . We'll never get such good ones again—not way out here in the country.

FARRINGTON

But common decency demands—

MRS. FARRINGTON

I can't see what discharging them is going to do for common decency—
It will just give them a chance to continue to be immoral elsewhere. Yes, it will. And just think, if they were immoral here in our home, how immoral they'll be in a home that isn't as respectable as ours. . .

FARRINGTON

(*Rubbing his chin.*) There is something in what you say, my dear.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Thank you, Lucullus.

FARRINGTON

But common decency demands that we do *something*. We can't permit a thing like this to go on. . .

MRS. FARRINGTON

They must get married. That is the only decent solution.

FARRINGTON

(*All smiles.*) Why, of course. That's been at the back of my mind, too. I don't know why I didn't think of it just now. Marriage is the customary end to such affairs. The girl becomes respectable again; the man is punished for his crime. A very, very laudable thing. The only thing, in fact . . . I must speak to them at once. I am glad we thought of that.

MRS. FARRINGTON

I thought of marriage instantly—naturally. Only I hesitated because Mabel is engaged to that young telegraph operator down at the station.

FARRINGTON

(*In airy surprise.*) And you let that weigh for a moment? The young telegraph operator must look elsewhere for a bride. Surely, my dear, you would not let him marry Mabel now? Speaking plainly, and this is a time for plain speaking, Mabel is, well, if not exactly damaged goods, at least, considerably soiled. . . . It would be a wrong, a gross wrong, to let this young telegraph operator marry Mabel. No, she has chosen. Let her abide by her choice.
I shall soon convince her that this is the only respectable, moral, ethical thing to do.

MRS. FARRINGTON

It must all be done quietly, Lucullus. Remember, we have two young girls in the house, one of whom, at least, is very innocent. . .

FARRINGTON

You mean Alice?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Coldly.*) I do not, Lucullus. Your

neice is charming, but hardly innocent. I was referring to your daughter.

FARRINGTON

But—but wasn't it Ethel who told you of this—business?

MRS. FARRINGTON

Yes, cook told her, and she came and cried in my lap. She is such an innocent child. . . That is why men do not seem to take to her. Men, I have found, do not admire innocence in a woman. . ,

FARRINGTON

(*Eyeing her suspiciously.*) May I ask, my dear, if there is anything personal in that?

[*His question is never answered. The French windows are opened and a young girl comes through. She is thin and sallow, pretty in a colorless way, but lacking in personality. She is the sort of person you forget three minutes after you have met her.*]

ETHEL

Oh, mother— (*She drops to her knees and buries her head in her mother's lap.*)

MRS. FARRINGTON

Ethel, you will ruin my dress. . . What is the matter, child?

ETHEL

(*Her head still buried.*) Mother—cook has just found out that she made a mistake.

FARRINGTON

A mistake! What do you mean, a mistake?

ETHEL

Mabel didn't go to Barr's room last night. . .

(*She hides her head again.*)

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*A bit provoked.*) Look up child. . . Is that anything to cry about? I am ashamed of you.

FARRINGTON

(*A bit pompously.*) I thought as much. . . A thing like that couldn't happen in this house. There's a whole lot in the saying, like master like man. . . .

ETHEL

(*Looking up.*) I don't think you understand.

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Pushing her aside.*) There, look at that stain. That's the second dress this morning you have wet with your tears. I wish you wouldn't be so emotional. . . .

ETHEL

(*Genuinely distressed.*) I'm sorry, mother, but—but it's so terrible. . .

FARRINGTON

What is so terrible?

ETHEL

(*Blushing furiously.*) I can't say it with you here, father. . . Please go away.

FARRINGTON

(*Suddenly frightened.*) Ethel, you haven't done anything—?

ETHEL

Oh, no, no. How could you think anything like that, father? Oh, mother!

(*She throws her arms about her mother and weeps afresh.*)

MRS. FARRINGTON

My poor child. (*She glares at Farrington.*) Lucullus, words fail me. . . Please, Ethel, you are getting my neck wet.

ETHEL

(*Sobbing.*) I can't help it. . .

FARRINGTON

Be sensible, cihld. . . I am your father, the author of your being. Anything you can say before your mother, you can say before me. . .

ETHEL

It—it wasn't Mabel was in Barr's room. . . It was Cousin Alice.

[*The Farringtons are stunned. They stare at each other, trying to talk, but*

finding no words. At last Farrington breaks the terrible silence.]

FARRINGTON

Alice! Your cousin Alice!

ETHEL

Ye-es.

FARRINGTON

(*Pointing into the garden, where a fair-haired girl is lying in the sun.*) But it can't be! She is there. And she has been singing all morning!

MRS. FARRINGTON

Even sinners sing, Lucullus.

FARRINGTON

I couldn't if *I* had sinned.

MRS. FARRINGTON

The brazen, wicked, sinful child to lie there among those pure and innocent flowers, when she knows—when she knows—that she has—

FARRINGTON

Ethel, retire. . . .

MRS. FARRINGTON

But not into the garden, child. . . . Go the library . . . or better still, go down to the village and see the motion pictures. . . .

ETHEL

Yes, mother. (*She goes, crying the while.*)

FARRINGTON

(*Looking out into the garden, frowning so severely that the caterpillars seem in danger of falling off.*) Hmp! (*And then after a moment*) Hmph!

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*With the little glow of satisfaction that even of the best of us feel when our prophecies are fulfilled*) I don't like to boast, Lucullus, but haven't I always said that that girl would come to no good? With such a father and such a mother—

FARRINGTON

Don't speak unkindly of the dead, my dear.

MRS. FARRINGTON

I never do, Lucullus. You know I never talk about anybody. But I can't help thinking about them. They led such wicked lives, and then died before anything happened to them. I always knew that somebody would be punished for what they had done. If not, what is the use of being good? That's what I want to know. What is the use of being good, if you're not punished for being bad?

FARRINGTON

You are right, my dear, unquestionably right.

MRS. FARRINGTON

So this doesn't surprise me in the least. My mother's heart trembled within me when you brought that girl here.

FARRINGTON

What else could I do, my dear—my own brother's child.

MRS. FARRINGTON

You could do nothing else. I realized that, but I prayed that our Ethel would be engaged before Alice got here. But Fate decided otherwise and now—(*She breaks off.*) Look, look, Lucullus! (*They stare out into the garden.*) She is turning a somersault! Look at those legs! What can you expect from a girl with legs like a chorus girl? (*Turning on her husband.*) Lucullus, this cannot go on. What are you going to do?

FARRINGTON

(*Dismally.*) I had forgotten that we were face to face with a situation. . . . If only cook hadn't seen her! . . .

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Shocked.*) You would want this to go on? I am ashamed of you, Lucullus.

FARRINGTON

No, no, no! You misunderstand me. If one of us had seen her, we could take more time to think it over. . . . (*He shakes his head sadly.*) Why wasn't it

Mabel? We had it all so nicely arranged.

MRS. FARRINGTON

For the sake of the telegraph operator I am glad it wasn't Mabel.

FARRINGTON

Yes, yes, but all our plans! We would have been doing such a moral deed if we had made Mabel marry Barr. . . . She would have been made respectable, he would have been punished. But now—now what can we do?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Sighing.*) If she could be made to marry Barr, it would be no more than she deserved.

FARRINGTON

My dear! I am surprised. Have you no family pride? And, after all, she is our niece!

MRS. FARRINGTON

I know, I know. . . . (*She sighs again.*) What is the world coming to? When we were young immorality was confined almost entirely to stage people. And now—

FARRINGTON

(*Impatiently.*) Nonsense! There were immoral women thousands of years ago.

MRS. FARRINGTON

But not chauffeurs, Lucullus.

FARRINGTON

Ssh! Ssh! I think I have it. (*There is a silence.*) Cook must be paid to keep quiet. . . . Barr— (*He sighs*) must be sent away. I know it seems unjust, that we should suffer for Alice's wrongdoing, but the rain, you know, falls alike on the just and the unjust. Barr must go.

MRS. FARRINGTON

It makes one wonder if it pays to be good.

FARRINGTON

Alice, we must keep here for the present.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Here? In the same house with us and Ethel—

FARRINGTON

We can send Ethel away.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Send Ethel away? Have you taken leave of your senses, Lucullus?

FARRINGTON

Please, let me finish. Alice we must keep under our eyes, so this—this sort of thing is not repeated. And we must get her married as soon as possible.

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Seeing the wisdom of this.*) Why, of course, we must. . . . That is just the thing to do. . . . And we must hurry before this leaks out.

FARRINGTON

You said not long ago that old Wilkins and the Townsend boy were rivals for her hand—

MRS. FARRINGTON

Let her marry old Wilkins. He is a disgusting creature. She ought to be punished in some way.

FARRINGTON

I heartily agree with you.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Ah!

FARRINGTON

What is it, my dear?

MRS. FARRINGTON

I have just thought that Wilkins will probably die soon and then she will be a young and wealthy widow. Is there no justice on earth?

FARRINGTON

I think we had better leave the dealing out of justice to God, my dear. We don't seem to be very successful at it. [*There is a knock at the windows.*]

FARRINGTON

Come.

[*A lithe young man in the uniform of a chauffeur enters.*]

MRS. FARRINGTON

Oh, it's you, Barr.

BARR

(*Smiling.*) Good morning.

FARRINGTON

(*Gruffly.*) Good morning. What do you want?

BARR

I have come to give notice, sir.

FARRINGTON

To—to do what?

BARR

To give notice. I'll have to leave you, sir, in a week, and I thought you'd like a little time to get someone else.

MRS. FARRINGTON

But why are you going to leave, Barr? We have been well satisfied . . .

BARR

Thank you, ma'am, but you see, I must get back to my work.

FARRINGTON

Your work? You are not clear, Barr.

BARR

I'm sorry. I'll explain. Running a car isn't my profession. I am doing it on a bet.

FARRINGTON

Running our car on a bet?

BARR

You see—I'm the vice-president of the Pan-American Trading Company. My father, Raymond Barr, founded the company, you see. Not so long ago, at one of our meetings, one of the directors and myself got into a scrap. He is a self-made man, I'm a father-made man. He said that I wouldn't be able to earn five dollars a week if left to my own resources. I bet him that I could. When vacation time came, I got this job with you. . . . I think I have won my bet. . . .

FARRINGTON

Well, well! H'm! Well, what do you think of that, my dear?

MRS. FARRINGTON

I have always said that there was something — something unchauffeurish about Mr. Barr.

FARRINGTON

(*Nodding.*) That's so. And haven't I been saying that it's unnatural for a chauffeur to be so honest and efficient?

BARR

Will you want the car this afternoon, Mrs. Farrington?

MRS. FARRINGTON

Oh, I couldn't think of asking you, Mr. Barr—

BARR

Please don't feel that way about it. Until you get someone else I am in your employ. . . .

FARRINGTON

(*Laughing.*) Of course, of course. Mr. Barr wants to play the game out. Very well, Mr. Barr. Bring the car around as usual then.

BARR

Thank you, sir. (*He goes. There is an ominous silence.*)

MRS. FARRINGTON

It's a strange world, isn't it, Lucullus?

FARRINGTON

H'm. Pan-American Trading Company—vice-president. H'm. . . .

MRS. FARRINGTON

He is such a nice young man.

FARRINGTON

(*Suddenly.*) Nice young man! Hmph! That reminds me. We mustn't forget about him and Alice. That wasn't such a nice thing to do. Hmph! He'll marry her for that. Eh?

MRS. FARRINGTON

I suppose he ought to.

FARRINGTON

Ought to? He must. It's the only decent thing for him to do. Good Lord!

A man can't go about ruining women—He'll have to marry her. It is the decent thing for him to do. That is what they always do if they are gentlemen.

MRS. FARRINGTON

And for being wicked she will be rewarded with a rich, handsome husband.

FARRINGTON

Didn't I suggest before, my dear, that we leave rewards and punishments to God?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*She has been staring into the garden.*) Look! He is going to her. . . . She is calling him! See how she raises her arms. She is kissing him. Lucullus, stop them! Stop them or I must go inside! . . . Thank Heaven, he is leaving her. Did you ever see anything so brazen? Kissing each other right in the sunlight.

FARRINGTON

They do make a good-looking couple.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Good-looking cou— (*She breaks off as an idea comes to her.*) Lucullus, Lucullus!

FARRINGTON

What is it?

MRS. FARRINGTON

Lucullus, she has inveigled him into this. She learned who he was, and she inveigled him. Remember, Lucullus, that she went to his room, not he to hers. . . . (*She throws back her head triumphantly.*)

FARRINGTON

H'm. So she did, so she did.

MRS. FARRINGTON

And you would make that poor boy a victim of her schemes. You know that I am not lax in my moral principles, but even I am willing to forgive a man when the girl forces herself upon him.

FARRINGTON

Yes, there is something in that.

MRS. FARRINGTON

It would be terrible to let her capture him in her net that way.

FARRINGTON

I—I can't quite believe that Alice would be guilty of such a scheme.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Lucullus, every girl schemes to win a man. Some more, some less. Some innocently, some not so innocently. Some by merely putting a rose in their hair, or by wearing a pretty dress; some by shrewder schemes. There is nothing wrong in trying to attract a man. Only when a girl uses the means Alice has employed she should not be permitted to succeed.

FARRINGTON

But they have done wrong, my dear, and only marriage will set them right. Common decency demands that.

MRS. FARRINGTON

There is something above common decency. Justice. It would be unjust to let her succeed, and it would also be unjust to make that poor boy miserable for the rest of his days.

FARRINGTON

But what are we to do, my dear?

MRS. FARRINGTON

We must separate them as soon as possible. Mr. Barr is going to remain here until we get someone else, therefore Alice must go.

FARRINGTON

We can let Barr go now, and hire someone from the village temporarily.

MRS. FARRINGTON

No. Alice must go. She must not be permitted to remain in the same house with our daughter. She is not a fit companion for Ethel.

FARRINGTON

But where is she to go?

MRS. FARRINGTON

That sweet, innocent little Gladys

Tolliver has been begging her to spend a month with them. Let her go there. And the sooner the better, Lucullus.

FARRINGTON

I don't see why you are so set on getting her away—

MRS. FARRINGTON

Please, Lucullus, be guided by me in this. Call her now. I'll help her pack her things, and Ethel can use the car alone this afternoon.

[*Farrington goes to the window.*]

FARRINGTON

Alice! (*A voice answers.*) Come here a moment. . . . She is coming.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Don't be too severe on her, Lucullus. Merely just.

FARRINGTON

You may depend on me, my dear.

[*They wait for* ALICE *to come. She comes. We already know that her hair is golden, and that she is trimly built. Her color is high; her eyes are alive. All in all, she is a very handsome girl.*]

ALICE

You called me, uncle.

FARRINGTON

I know it. (*There is a pause.*) Alice, I have a painful task ahead of me.

ALICE

Can I help you, uncle?

FARRINGTON

You can help indeed. Alice, you were in Mr. Barr's room last night for one hour—

MRS. FARRINGTON

An hour and ten minutes.

FARRINGTON

An hour and ten minutes, after the family had gone to bed.

ALICE

Yes, I was—

FARRINGTON

(*Interrupting her.*) Please. I'll do the talking. You answer questions. . . . What did you—

MRS. FARRINGTON

Lucullus! Remember I am present.

ALICE

You want to know why I went there?

MRS. FARRINGTON

We do not.

ALICE

It isn't anything I can't tell you. We were looking over hotel ads.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Hotel ads?

ALICE

Yes, trying to decide on an itinerary for our honeymoon.

FARRINGTON

You are going to marry Mr. Barr?

ALICE

No—

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Triumphantly.*) Ah!

FARRINGTON

You are not going to marry him, and yet you plan—

ALICE

I married him a week ago last Tuesday. I thought you wouldn't like me to marry a chauffeur, so we kept it secret.

MRS. FARRINGTON

But he is not a chauffeur.

ALICE

So I have learned since. Isn't it delightful?

FARRINGTON

Yes. . . . I am very glad, my dear. I have always known you were a fine girl. (*He kisses her.*)

ALICE

Thank you. I'm glad to hear you say

that. I've been afraid you didn't trust me—

FARRINGTON

Nonsense, my dear, why shouldn't we trust you?

MRS. FARRINGTON

You do your uncle an injustice. . . . I sometimes didn't trust you, but all that is past now. I am very glad. (ALICE *looks at her doubtfully.*) Yes, I am. Even if I don't altogether approve of you, I am glad. (*They kiss each other warmly.*)

ALICE

May I go now? I promised Ted I'd meet him in ten minutes—

FARRINGTON

Yes, go. (*She goes and he waves his hand after her.*)

MRS. FARRINGTON

I am glad it has turned out this way, only— Look, look at the way she picks up her dress to jump the hedge. Where, I ask you, is there justice on this earth?

CURTAIN



TWO MET

By George Sterling

YOU came, and Mystery murmured in the wood;
You spoke: a dryad ventured from her tree;
Or was it that my fancy could but see
The sweet incredible and found my mood
Demanding the impossible for food?
I know that both were softly granted me,
When, like a goddess on her devotee,
You smiled, and joy was made the only good.

For us had Silence made the dusk a shrine;
For us had needles fallen from the pine;
For us had come that wind from out the South,
Wafting your loosened hair across my face,
As I, oblivious of time and space,
Turned to your fragrance and consenting mouth.



THE worst kiss is delightful if only one gets it unexpectedly, unlawfully and behind the door.



CLOSE-UPS

By June Gibson

I

I DREAMED of a snug little home with Frank, far from the cares of of the clattering world.

He proposed. . .

Suddenly, I pictured Mission furniture and the odor of boiling turnips.

II

I dreamed of idling before a huge fireplace while Howard told me of his astronomic discoveries.

He proposed. . .

I pictured rubbers and a hot-water bottle.

III

I dreamed of the envy of my friends if I married Harold, who was so handsome that women blushed when he entered the room.

He proposed. . .

I pictured pacing the drawing-room, already two hours late, waiting while Harold trimmed his moustache.

IV

I hope Jerry does not propose. . .

I have a sneaking suspicion that Jerry wears union-suits.

INCOMPATIBILITY

By Mary MacMillan

ALL I like is a little house
With a garden of flowers and an apple tree,
With a hill behind and the sky above.
And a hearth with a fire for me.

You want a palace with carved oak chairs,
With crystal and gold and tapestry,
With waiting men and brilliant lights,
And a throng for company.

You face the sun, I face the moon,
There's a twisted cord from you to me,
A knotted cord, and, oh, my dear,
Love is captivity.

MEDITATION

By Major Owen Hatteras, D. S. O.

IT is astonishing how, as the years go roaring by, they fade and disintegrate. All I remember of Julia, calling her back from the shadows of that long-lost June, is that her mother was inordinately stout and had a habit of wearing black satin—a pathetic form of cosmetic suicide that fat women used to run to. Another thing: I once dragged her behind a hay-cock and kissed her in true buccaneer manner—that is to say, I kissed Julia, if Julia was actually her name. Maybe it was Juliet: there was a fashion then for the names of Shakespeare's heroines. Whether, thus buccally set upon, she squeaked and fought or merely caught her breath—as they usually do at that age—I simply can't remember. Nor do I recall her surname, nor the face of any other relative: only her obese mother, a billowy and sinister figure, remains. . . .

Sometimes they survive as perfumes; sometimes as curious, caressing laughs; sometimes as frocks; sometimes as mere details of spacious, sky-blue days. There is one who lingers as the mere daughter of her father, just as Julia (or Juliet) lives chiefly as an overtone to her bulging and sable mother. This father—I haven't the slightest notion what his name was—was a violent Freemason, and, assuming me to be of age, made elaborate plans to recruit me for his mystical fraternity. I say mystical for the reason that its vaguely Rosicrucian character seemed to be the precise thing that enchanted him and made him delight in it. I remember him telling me, with the air of a man imparting a nefarious secret, that Paracelsus had been a member. Who Paracelsus was I didn't learn until years later. This gentleman, on one occasion, showed me some of his personal regalia. It included, I recall, a sword inscribed with a cross. The weapon, it appeared, had been consecrated by some esoteric dignitary of inconceivable eminence—a man whose very title was incomprehensible to me. I gathered that every Freemason possessed such a sword, and that the whole arsenal was pledged to some transcendental cause or crusade, not to be mentioned in specific terms. . . . This gentleman's creepy hints and eye-rollings finally became so uncomfortable that I kept away from his house. What became of his daughter, God knows. . . .

Catharine stands up in memory much more clearly. I even remember her surname, probably because her father kept a shop near my home and I saw his sign every day. Catharine was the first girl ever to propose marriage to me. I remember well how her sudden onslaught frightened me, and how I groped for something to say. What I finally got out I don't know, but I recall how she sniffed at it and said that I was silly. . . . She had better luck soon afterward. Before she was eighteen she was married to a clerk in a bank—a laborious but rather ineffective young man, now risen to a responsible post in a third-rate bank. I used to hear of her having children now and then, chiefly girls; by this time, I suppose, some of them are married themselves, and perhaps Catharine is a grandmother. I forgot to say that she was very pretty—nay, for all I know, she still is. The last time I saw her she was at least thirty-five, with five or six youngsters

behind her, and yet there was an unmistakable bloom on her cheek and her step was sprightly and even saucy. . . .

In truth, the notion that they all grow shapeless and revolting is largely a cynical affectation; every man, as he slips into middle age himself, must gradually acquire a sense of the contrary. Take ten men at random and ten women, and I have an inclination to believe that the ten women will outlast the ten men. At all events, they will hold up better during the middle years—after fifty there is another story to tell. No woman ever reaches her maximum of charm until she is beyond thirty. I should say that thirty-three sees her absolutely at her best. Youth, true enough, has bloom, and that bloom fades—but youth also has a certain round-cheeked woodenness, a doll-like vacuity. To love a girl of nineteen or twenty is simply an imbecility; it is like preferring a duck just shot to one that has hung for a while. In all perfect beauty there is a hint of decay—one must get a hint of its evanescence—of the eternal transitoriness of perfection. This is the secret of its melancholy, so often marked by poets. One must have a feeling that one is beholding, not only an exquisite thing, but also an exquisite thing that cannot last. The ego demands that certainty; in it there is a sort of exclusiveness of possession. Why is an artificial flower disgusting? Surely not because it is not intrinsically beautiful; it may be, in fact, quite as beautiful as any blossom on a living stem. Nay, the reason is that it is fixed, static, durable—that the romantic glamour of doom is not in it.

These thoughts are suggested by one whose name I cannot remember for the life of me. I loved her in 1898, toward the end of the year. A year or so ago I met her on the street—and was quite overcome. I had not seen her for fifteen years, and it somehow astonished me that I recognized her instantly—that she was so little changed. And yet, why not? Those slim, trim, small-boned blonde women, until they grow downright gray, have a way of holding their looks that no brunette can even match. Their hair, I daresay, actually becomes colorless and hempen—but such catastrophes are child's play to competent hairdressers. This one—I am inclined to think that her name was Laura—was still positively radiant, and at—well, I am sure it must have been thirty-nine. Her eyes, once tending toward China blue—the most idiotic of colors—had become violet, and their long lashes, heavily encrusted with some sort of black pigment, gave them a deep and provocative mysteriousness. Rather childishly, we backed into a doorway on a crowded street, and talked it over. A pleasant enough conversation, though somewhat crippled by my inability to recall her name—even her given name.

From her I heard some of the current gossip about myself—she was still on good terms, it appeared, with various persons who remembered me, and followed my doings idly. As you may guess, all the news she had to impart was inaccurate—for example, that I was chivalrously in love with the wife of a colonel in the artillery, and that an American widow, the relict of the rich attorney for some trust or other, had marked me down. I was, I hope, properly inscrutable; it is surely bad form to deny such tales. This Laura—if that was her name—made me promise to ring her up on the morrow. I had to lie, for asking her her name would have given pain to a very charming woman. . . .

Hilda, I think, remains the clearest of them all. I not only remember her name, I also remember some of her frocks. Looking back, it seems almost inconceivable that kissing her could have been the stupendous experience it actually was. Her folks inhabited a suburb and we used to take long walks along the winding roads. She had a way, whenever we came to a favorable spot, of halting suddenly, turning toward me, holding out her arms and closing her eyes. Without a word, I'd solemnly and even reverently enwrap her,

and there we'd stand for perhaps a full minute, like prize-fighters in a clinch. Nothing was ever said. As for me, speech was as impossible as flying. The experience was simply colossal, overwhelming. Sometimes, as we resumed our walk, I'd be literally shaky in the knees, like a man just emerging from some shattering shock. But it was very chaste kissing. No vulgar pawing, gurgling, eye-rolling, gasping. Hilda scarcely opened her lips. She was a girl intrinsically reserved and virginal. I have never known another woman to kiss so exquisitely. . . . She married a stock-broker.

I daresay I loved this Hilda. If so, my detractors should make note of it, for it was a love infinitely idealistic and sublimated—a passion almost disembodied. It died, I suppose, of mere attenuation—it was too delicate to live. To its funeral came Margaret—and with Margaret came my first experience of love as melodrama. For six months—but why revive those six months? The last two weeks—thrilling, staggering, almost appalling—I shall still remember after æons in Hell. I emerged from them shattered in soul—a man grown habituated and indifferent to grand scenes, shocking accusations, incredible demands, black suspicions, the whole gaudy hocus-pocus of yellow-back love. . . . Strangely enough, Margaret and I parted amicably. I had made the Bayreuth season an excuse for escaping, and when I went to say my farewells she gave me—of all things!—a copy of "De Imitatio Christi"—one of those thin, parchment-bound volumes, then in fashion. I threw it over a garden wall on my way home. . . .

The best kisser: Hilda, undoubtedly. The one I truly loved most—again I forget: if her name wasn't Helen, then it must have been Fay. Fay? Ye gods, *what* a name for a pretty woman!



WHEN love dies, the woman is never content with a quiet funeral. She always demands a wake and a coroner's inquest.



A WOMAN is as happy as she looks pretty. A man is as happy as he feels important.



A BACHELOR is one who admires roses without yearning to dig up the rose bush.



THE modern newspaper: the unmentionable in terms of the unreadable.



KING SOLOMON AND THE TWO WIVES

By Helen Woljeska

AND it came to pass that one day as Solomon the King sate on his throne of jasper and porphyry, dealing out justice, two beautiful young women and an ordinary-looking, middle-aged man were brought before him. Each of the women claimed to be the man's legitimate wife, and each demanded to have the other ejected from his domicile.

Then spake Solomon the King. "What dost thou think of this man?" he asked of one of the women.

And the woman turned up moist, ecstatic eyes and said: "He is the noblest, dearest of men! It would be impossible to find another so strong yet so delicate, so keen yet so kind. His boyish laugh, his stormy caresses, his naïve sincerity have won my whole heart. I love him. I love him! And I want him!"

Then spake Solomon the King. "What dost *thou* think of this man?" as asked of the other woman.

And the woman's nostrils trembled indignantly and she said: "I know too well that he is but a sorry specimen of humanity! He is weak—only strong enough to break the heart of his faithful handmaiden. He is dull—only keen enough to devise ever new ways of humiliating and torturing her. His boisterous mirth, his coarse passion, his brutal lack of tact nauseate me. Yet, I need him. And I want him!"

"Thou art the wife," he said.

Then he blew his nose sadly, and sighed.



A WOMAN devotes half her energy to marrying off her daughter and the other half to keeping her son out of the clutches of designing hussies.



IN quarrelling with women it is pleasant to be right and prove it. But it is a good deal safer to be wrong and admit it.



THE woman who asserts she was beautiful as a child is always the one who has burned the family album.

A KISS FOR THE BISHOP

By Gertrude Brooke Hamilton

THE weather was sparkling, and had been for weeks. The sun shone unceasingly, the breezes along the Drive brimmed with effervescent suggestions, and the river below the Drive dimpled like the back of a naughty *danseuse*.

For weeks, in her costly and decorous apartment, Carène, the young wife of Pompey Gilfoil, had been out of temper. Life moved with such inevitable precision and seemliness in Pompey's domain! Stevens, the serving-man, Witherspoon, Carène's maid, and Paulton, the chauffeur, all reflected Pompey's adherence to the conventions and proprieties. The weather had never been known to disturb a feature of Pompey Gilfoil's handsome countenance.

Carène loved her big husband. But, *que voulez-vous?* The young wife was of French origin and had wine for blood—a great-great aunt, a little *duchesse*, had drunk so dizzily of sweet waters that the sad little tale of her life was quite intoxicating. Carène was fond of thinking the little *duchesse*, long dead, accountable for the fizziness in her own colorful veins.

Carène sat in a windowed-seat overlooking the sunny Drive and dimpling river. Her lips seemed framed for a kiss deepened by *ennui* and lightened by perversity. As there was no one about but Witherspoon, upon whom such a kiss would be wasted, the lips drooped—and Carène fingered the tassel of the window-shade, pensively. She wondered how she might spend the afternoon and avoid weariness of spirit. There were several things that the wife of Pompey Gilfoil, banker and paragon, might do: she might order the limousine and have Paulton drive her down the Avenue, among fleets of other cars, all subservient to white-gloved hands of traffic policemen; or she might have Witherspoon array her in her violet velvet and sables for an hour of idling at the Ritz-Carlton with some dear feminine *chatte*, furred in equal luster; or she might drink tea at home, with Stevens at the tea-cart. There were several things she might do—while the giddy gold of the afternoon turned to purple in the western sky, behind the Park and the river!

She did not care for the things she might do.

So she stayed on the window-seat, and thought of her dead little *duchesse* and true Parisien headiness. Her own escapades and follies, being untouched by the mellowness of antiquity, simmered flatly in comparison with the sins of her great-great aunt. Yet, *gage d'amour!*—Carène had misdemeanors to tabulate! There were incidents, trivial enough to mean nothing, *outré* enough to threaten breakage, in the secret gardens of her very modern soul. Playing with the tassel of the window-shade, her lips, again, framed for kissing. Had the breeze that blew out the curtains of corn-colored silk been a lover, how lucky the breeze.

Witherspoon appeared between the portières with a corded florist's box held against her sateen bosom.

"Flowers, Mrs. Gilfoil," she said, moving forward like a figure in a wooden Noah's Ark.

Carène untied the gold cord of the box. Pompey liked her to wear a dinner *corsage*. There was a note from him attached to the orchids. Repres-

sing a sigh, and thinking of husbands, Carène perused Pompey's nice message.

"*Dear Carène,*" Pompey had written from the florist's, "*Wear these to-night and look your loveliest, for I will bring a bishop home to dinner.*

"*Devotedly, Pomp.*"

She handed the orchids to Witherspoon

"A bishop," she sighed; "on such an evening!"

Witherspoon put the flowers in water.

"They are lovely, Mrs. Gilfoil," she said.

"A comfortably conversable dignitary, with an eye for the roast and a smile for the wine-glasses!" the slight voice sighed. "How Pomp dotes on misfits with the weather. The sun never sets gold over the river, Witherspoon, but what a clerical, or a judge, comes home with my husband."

"Shall you wear your white satin gown to-night, Mrs. Gilfoil?" Witherspoon inquired.

"No," snapped Carène, "my brandywine chiffon. Go away, Wither. You disgust me. *Ca ennui â la fin!* A wooden servitor! Do go away."

The corn-colored curtains blew out all about Carène, like clouds of anger. Shrugging, she leaned from the window and watched the world below—the Drive, with its small people and tall trees and squat shrubbery, and its tiers of stone steps going down to the water; the long, shimmering river, prismatic in the late afternoon, and shot by golden paths, as the sun wended westward.

Witherspoon, in a room of the apartment, laid out the white satin frock and its chaste accessories.

When the paths of gold on the river were beginning to lengthen, Carène gave herself over to the hands of her maid. In white satin embroidered with gold, with orchids at her belt and a slim band of gold binding her blonde hair, the young wife of Pompey Gilfoil resembled a lily with gold calyx. Only her lips betrayed the wine in her veins.

She was at the piano, running melodies, when Pompey came in with his dinner-guest. Often as Pompey came in, either alone or with guests, Carène was impressed anew by his handsome proportions, bordering on lovable clumsiness. Her fingers lifted from the ivories, as Pompey came the length of the drawing-room, with his bishop in tow.

The bishop was tall and young—and all that he should be. He possessed the brow of an orator and the profile of an ascetic. Grey eyes and raven hair rendered him not unpicturesque. His manner was remote and shy toward a bare-shouldered sylph with orchids at her belt.

It evolved, at the candle-shaded dinner table, that Pompey had captured a cherry-blossom dignitary — Abelard Madrigal, Bishop of Kyu-shu, an island in South Japan. With the toneless accuracy of a coolie loading a coal-ship, Bishop Madrigal entertained his host by tales of Buddha-worshippers, of mystical faiths and cults, of temples and pagodas, of flowery customs and Eastern prejudices. With the same delicate monotony, the Bishop consumed his soup, his entrée, his beef, his salad and his demi-tasse. Carène traced the damask of the cloth with the tip of her coffee-spoon. *Tiens!* How stupid o be a young saint, in far Japan! She lighted a cigarette, and blew rings of perfumed smoke, to form a chain of halos for the head of her husband's guest.

Pompey in no way shared her humor. In the candlelight, the banker's slightly rubicund face was attentive and interested. Pompey liked to sit at his dinner table, with his lovely young wife opposite, and listen to pleasant discourse. His cigar smoke ascended in a solid spiral of melliferous vapor .

Beyond the windows of the apartment, a moon was rising over the river and the stars were little worlds a-whirl. In the drawing-room, corn-colored curtains blew out to the night. *La belle nuit!* Carène finished her cigarette. She arose. Fingering a white velvet neck-ribbon, on which a medallion

swung, she led Pompey and the Bishop of Kyu-shu into the room overlooking the moon-flooded Park and river. Pompey asked her to sing for them. Mobile face and moonshine hair reflected in a mirror over the piano, she sang, with her thoughts pirouetting somewhere in the silvery night:

"'L'on se fait souvent mille promesses,
Les femmes nous grisent de mots fous . . . . .
Mais qu'importe puisque leurs caresses
Nous font passer des instants si doux!"

Her voice might have been that of the little *duchesse,* singing down over the years of bitter-sweet ebullitions. She drifted from one frothy song to another. Her husband gave her courteous and appreciative attention. The Bishop appeared oblivious to such enchanting cherry-blossoms of sound; standing on the hearth-rug with his feet planted firmly and his regular profile turned toward the fire.

The telephone tinkled in the hall.

Stevens moved from the rear of the apartment, and, a second later, hovered about the door of the drawing-room, discreetly summoning his master.

Pompey excused himself, strolling out to the hall and taking the telephone receiver into his big grasp with his glance going back toward the music-lamp. He uttered the conventional "Yes?" A moment of listening brought a shade of concern to his countenance.

"I'll be with you directly, Doctor," he said, and hung up the receiver with a rather hurried hand.

His return to the drawing-room was marked by some perturbation.

"Mother has suffered another seizure, Carène," he explained.

He spoke to the Bishop: "My mother who lives across town is subject to heart attacks. When they overtake her, the doctor usually summons her children to her bedside. There are five of us Gilfoils; we meet at Mother's house once in every few weeks. A mother is pretty precious, you know."

Anxiety puckering his attractive face, Pompey turned again to Carène. "I'll depend on you to take care of Bishop Madrigal for an hour or two, dear. You know how it is. I must go to Mother."

The Bishop was sympathetic.

"I lost my mother when very young," he said to Pompey, with his rapid and colorless intonation. "Go at once. I trust you will find no cause for real alarm."

"Give the *belle-mère* my love, Pomp," said Carène, from the piano-bench.

Carène was inclined to grimace over the not infrequent seizures of her mother-in-law's heart: being very old, in a decadent and magnificent residence across town, Mrs. Muney Gilfoil, mother of five, was prone to manoeuvres of the heart when she wished to see her children!

"Au revoir, my adored *laurdard,"* smiled Carène, as Pompey took his overcoat and stick from Stevens.

II

THERE lay before Carène, at the end of a temper-tinged day, the task of entertaining the Bishop of Kyu-shu. Her spirit was yawning—and her mouth was downcast—as she sat on the piano-bench, with a ringed hand on each side of her and the mirror reflecting her sheened hair and shoulders.

The Bishop had, also, a yawn in his eyes—it was obvious that any of his choice stories of missions and mystics might fall on cold ground. He appeared embarrassed and distant, as he kept his place on the hearth-rug and twirled his thin young thumbs.

They conversed of Japan and Manhattan. She inquired about mammoth gods with real gold eyes and Mona Lisa smiles; and he spoke, with some asperity, of the gods of modern Babylon, of gold, and affixed smiles. Their stilted, and divided, converse chilled the atmosphere of the roseate room. From a desire to yawn, Carène passed to an impulse to voice a dainty oath.

"Nom de Dieu!" she exclaimed, under her breath, "it is outrageous to be young and saintly!"

The window-curtains swayed rhythmically in the night breezes, and straying moonlight mingled with the fire-glow and lampshine of the drawing-room. From the river, came sounds of passing boats. From the Drive, arose the whir and swish of passing motor-cars. How the moon must be winking at the world! Carène said, of the Bishop's twiddling fingers:

"If you get tired of turning your thumbs in one direction, it lessens the labor to turn them in the other direction, Monseignor Madrigal."

The Bishop started, and looked down at his thumbs.

"I beg your pardon!" he ejaculated, with a gleam of humor.

"C'est tout pardonner," murmured Carène, twiddling her own pretty thumbs.

The sounds of the night outside grew elusively emphatic—they seemed to come into the room and frolic there, like a carnival crowd in Nice, throwing confetti and laughing. With a movement of involuntary youth, Carène jumped up and went to a window that opened on a balcony with a view of the river.

"Has your Japan any more ethereal sight than the Hudson strung with fairy lights," she cried, as she parted the silk curtains and widened the window. "See, the lights dance on the water, the water makes music for the lights."

The curtains blew on each side of her.

"How sad that there should be any old souls tonight!" she said, dreamily.

Swept by a touch of night-worship, by a flicker of temper, she rather discourteously turned her shoulder on Pompey's guest, and stepped out to the window-balcony. She leaned there, her cheek upon her hand, rapt as Juliet on her love-balcony.

The Bishop was young enough to join in her night-worship. His step out to the balcony was devoid of self-consciousness. He stood by the rail, looking at the view. "Yet," he said, seriously, "cannot the old souls appreciate God's beauty, too?"

She shuddered. "Let me die before I mouth and mumble my appreciation of the moon!"

"That is a wrong way to look at old age, which is the golden end of youth," quietly.

"An end, indeed! *A Dieu ne plaise!"* She lifted shivering hands, and the shiver, by chance, untied the bow of the white velvet ribbon on which her medallion swung. With a soft slide, the ornament—an ivory miniature of the little dead *duchesse*—fell from the velvet strand to the street, far below.

Carène caught after her medallion, bending forward, and gazing down through the moonlight.

"Ah, my trinket! *mon joujou!* It is gone!"

The Bishop peered over the balcony.

"No!" he cried. "I see it on the pavement! It lies near the gutter. I will get it for you."

He stepped through the window into the room, with a long stride.

"I would be heartbroken to lose it," declared Carène, following him, and catching up a cloak from the hall, as she passed through.

They descended to the street, by way of the mirrored elevator—and the Bishop, who was sure he had located the medallion from the balcony, poked with his foot over a particular portion of the pavement.

"I am positive that it fell here," he consoled her. "We shall find it."

"I feel that she is lost," responded Carène, desolate. "You know," hesitantly, "she *was* lost—*la petite.* She fell almost into the gutter. *Ah, ma pauvre duchesse!"* Her satin toe followed in the wake of the Bishop's toe, over the half-dark pavement.

She saw the medallion lying near the gutter, as the Bishop, inadvertently took a forward step, and crushed the trinket to atoms with his heel.

"Hélas!" she sighed, fatalistic.

She graciously covered his dismay. "It could not be helped. Let us pick up what is left."

She stooped to gather the flecks of painted ivory and the pearl case of the miniature.

The Bishop showed chagrin at what he had done.

"Think of my stepping on your locket!" he cried. "Was it an heirloom?"

He went down on his angular knees to help her recover the fragments.

"It was a picture of my great-great aunt, who, I fancy, often felt a godly heel on her cheek," laughed Carène.

Cupping her hands to receive the ivory remains from his, she looked out to the river, mystical, limitless, with dancing lights along its edges.

"Let us walk down to the water and give *la duchesse* to the waves," she suggested, impulsively.

Cradling the ruined medallion in her palms, she swept across the pavement toward an entrance of the Park where tiers of stone steps led down to the river.

The Bishop kept pace with her.

"There was no excuse for my awkwardness," he said quickly. "An heirloom is a thing that cannot be replaced."

They descended the first flight of steps, and described circles of white concrete to another tier, leading to a pier that ran out to a boathouse.

"The river is divine this evening!" commented Carène, traversing the pier. "What a pity we cannot fly over it, like gulls."

"Yes," answered the Bishop, thoughtfully; "there are times when we long to shed our bodies, and fly free."

"Ah, mais non!" expostulated Carène. "What would we do with such horrible, vast freedom? Our flesh imprisons us. It is true. But we are not brave enough to wish ourselves out of prison."

She became meditative. Opening her hand, she stretched it out, full of broken ivory.

"Will you intone the burial-at-sea service, Monsiegneur Madrigal?" She asked, without mockery. "We shall consecrate *la petite* to a long rest under the waves."

In the same instant, she closed her hand and indicated a ridge of foam beyond the confines of the pier.

"I'd rather bury her out there," she exclaimed; "it is farther from the shore."

She caught her cloak about her.

"Pompey's motor-boat is moored nearby," she told the Bishop. "Let us get it, and consign my little *duchesse* to a wave farthest from the shore!"

Looking not unlike a young angel, shod and cloaked in white, she sped along the pier, to the boathouse. Her flutelike voice summoned the boathouse keeper.

"Mr. Gilfoil's motor, Hemp," she called to the brawny keeper of the boats.

When a cushioned craft rocked up to the pier, she slipped the bits of ivory into a pocket of her cloak, and stepped down into the boat. She took the steering-wheel between her ringed hands, waiting for the Bishop to join her.

A rapid step landed the Bishop in the boat. He seated himself, with his black hair blowing up from his forehead.

"I have never been in a motor-boat before," he remarked, as the craft took the waves.

"What?" cried Carène, incredulous. "Have you never before cut through the water in moonlight? Why, what do they do when the moon shines in Kyu-su?"

She recalled his renunciative status in life.

"Tiens!" she exclaimed. "How droll!"

She turned the wheel, and they rode between ridges of foam.

As she ploughed the white waters, her thoughts turned on righteousness and things of heaven.

"Tell me how it feels to be young and saintly," she commanded, with simple curiosity.

The Bishop replied calmly, "I do not know."

"Tell me," her low tone was insis-

tent—"what leads one to goodness? Are some born with holy water in their veins? Had you, Monseigneur, a great-great uncle who fasted in a cell?" She let the boat fly free, between the snowy ridges.

The vessel left in its wake a fleeting path of foam, while, beyond it, the waters were yet to be cut by a moon-burnished prow. On and on, flowed the uncut river ahead of them. The Bishop sat erect in the cushions of the motor-boat. His hair blew up. Particles of water moistened his forehead and mouth, making them glisten. His eyes were young, under their level brows. Once, when the craft danced over a billow, he laughed.

Carène echoed the laugh, in younger cadence.

"We are gulls," she shrugged, against the breeze and spray. "Or are we flying souls? There, ahead! See! White shapes walk on the water! Shall we gain paradise if we ride far enough?"

The vapors drenched and curled her corn-silk hair. Through the floating moisture her eyes shone bluer than either the sky or the river.

She turned to her companion.

"If we were truly riding to paradise —if a little further on we were dashed to pieces or suddenly swallowed up by the river—what would your thoughts be Monseigneur Madrigal?"

The boat seemed to leap forward under her frail hands.

"What would you think, for instance, if a small accident occurred, if something went wrong with the steering-gear and I lost control of the wheel, if the gods took a notion to annihilate us and overturn the boat? What would you think, if, in reality, those white shapes ahead were our own ghosts, Monseigneur?"

There was a trace of recklessness, of rising excitement, in her accents.

The Bishop appeared very tall in his changeless posture on the cushions.

"I hope," he said, not without a gleam of whimsy, "that I would meet my ghost without quailing."

"You are an *homme règle,*" sighed Carène, hands tightening on the wheel. "You have no reason to fear your ghost. But, confess,—if oblivion were just ahead, might you not wish your spectre a trifle less orderly? They say, that in the supreme moment when we are to die our whole life passes before us in review, and our inevitable cry is for the thing we have not had, the person we have not been. Tell me," impetuously, "of your life, Monseigneur, —has it had no disorder in it?"

His reply came through increasing foam and wind.

"I cannot say that it has, Mrs. Gilfoil. At least, no personal disorder. My father, who was a missionary to the Cherokee Indians, was massacred, and my mother with him. As a baby, I was half smothered by blood. But I cannot point to any havoc in my own existence."

Carène's vaporous face quickened to an eerie loveliness.

"And have you never eaten of *le pain bénit de la gaité?*" she inquired, against the breezes.

"I never have," he responded, serenely.

The boat reached the more solitary lengths of the river. The lights on either shore seemed more distant. The moon seemed nearer.

"You are lucky, Monseigneur Madrigal!" cried Carène, bending slightly forward over the wheel and gripping it with waxen fingers. "Few of us have feasted only on holy bread. Few can imagine oblivion, and remain at peace. Take myself—I hope I have no ghost to walk with me on eternal waters! Take my neighbors—it would be the same, I think, with them. Take my husband—would he enjoy trudging eternity beside his Wall-street conscience? Take one who, by now, must have danced æons with her dead self—my litle *duchesse, la petite diablesse!* Shall I tell you of her end? She gave herself, her body, you understand, to the waves, Monseigneur. She consigned herself, while still young, to the *reposoir* of the Seine. She had, some time before, run away from her duke

with another titled gentleman, an *homme de salon,* a *roué,* Monseigneur. It seems that she loved this wicked man. For I cherish the last lines that she wrote before going out to the Seine. The message was sent by her lover to the duke, who preserved it. *'Je t'aime,'* she wrote, æons ago. That was all—*'Je t'aime.'* "

The Bishop had scant patience for the tale of *la petite duchesse.*

"Why is it that often the last words of the foolish are cherished, and the last words of the wise are forgotten?" he remarked, briefly.

"You are harsh, *mon ami,*" gaily—as the boat flew on. "I remember! You were quick to put your heel on her cheek. Perhaps, you might be more charitable were you less orderly. A touch of foolishness might increase your wisdom."

Her laugh was heady and sweet. The breezes made sails of her swansdown cloak. She was youth incarnate. And white folly. Dazzling flesh, and delectable naughtiness. A little woman of the world.

Abelard Madrigal, Bishop of Kyushu, ascetic young saint, regarded the sprite with undisturbed grey eyes. He was drenched from head to foot by the dews from the ridges of spray. Higher and higher they rose, the snowy, moon-topped ridges. The motor-boat seemed speed-crazy, under the near moon. It whizzed through the waters like an arrow shot from a tipsy hand. Showers of water-drops rained on the Bishop.

Carène's corn-silk head bent lower over the wheel. Suddenly she gave a slight gasp. Pallor flecked her cheeks.

"Dame! I was not mistaken!" she murmured, wrenching the wheel.

Her whisper was palpitant, over the whir of the motor:

"For some minutes, Monseigneur Madrigal, I have had no control of the boat. There is something wrong! I cannot manage it!"

She lost her breath, bending to the wheel—in the vapors, her face matched the ivory shoulders from which her cloak slipped.

The Bishop acted quickly.

Instantly, he was tinkering with the motor.

"I know nothing of machinery," he confessed. "Are you sure you have lost control?"

"Yes," said Carène frantically. "I fear we are in danger."

He worked without wisdom, on his knees in the motor-boat.

"I do not understand the mechanism!" he ejaculated. "What a fool I am."

They were far enough up the river to seem nearly alone, and the speed at which the boat was going excluded the possibility of explaining their plight to any craft they might be passing.

"But," said the Bishop, peering at cogs and screws, "there must be some way of stopping us!"

"It would seem so," agreed Carène, intent on the wheel.

The momentum of their flight increased rather than slackened.

"C'est plus fort que moi!" she cried, half inaudibly.

From his knees, hands admittedly inadequate, the Bishop looked over the ridges of flying foam.

"Shall I shout for aid?" he questioned her rapidly.

"If you wish to," she retorted,—"though your ghost might consider a cry from you 'quailing,' Monseigneur."

"If you are in peril," replied the Bishop, impatiently, "and I am a fool, I shall call for help."

He made a megaphone of his thin hands, but, before sending a deep halloo over the river, he dropped his hands—and went, agitatedly, at the mysterious running-gear of the boat.

"There *must* be some way to stop us!" he said, between his teeth.

His hair blew up in a wet, black wave from his reddened forehead. His hands became fierce. He crouched forward, lean young body muscular, cords whipping up on his neck.

"There—must—be!" he blurted, flushing.

Carène's face was not far from his, as she bent to the wheel.

"How amazing!" she panted. *"Impossible!* What possesses it?—Absurd! We can do nothing!"

She was inclined to sob.

"Sainte Vierge! to face such absurdity and be powerless—young and strong! We have our teeth, our faculties, Monseigneur, we neither mumble nor whimper— Yet, we cannot stop this moonlit spin!—"

The sobbing voice was hardly more than a breath:

"Ah, mon Dieu, we have lost control of our destinies. You, Monseigneur Abelard, with the blood of a massacred missionary—I—. The fall of my medallion was a *porte-malheur!* We are young, *mon ami,* to fly into peril." Faintly: "We are but children, *et beaux enfants!"*

The moist cheek of ivory touched the wet cheek of parchment.

"Have courage," counseled the Bishop, face to the wind. His voice slowed, gained color. "After all—danger is a beautiful adventure."

She was huddled against him, a luminous heap, with phosphorescent hands on the wheel. "But, we do not wish to die!" she quavered. Distraught: "how do we know that we have ever lived?" Anguished: "How do we know but what we have missed something? I, I have not experienced one saintly young minute—And you, you have not eaten a crumb of the bread of joy. We cannot die, unless we have lived! Ah, it is true as *le bon Dieu* that almost I could love thee if, in this moment, thou couldst give me one taste of saintliness! And—thou—?"

Kneeling in the flying motor-boat, cheek to cheek with a questioning sylph—with possible danger ahead, and nothing but vapors behind—a look of inward consternation tweaked the Bishop's orderly young features!

He pressed his lean cheek to the fair one. An involuntary sigh was wrung from him.

The moon showed a human and world-old expression on the face of the imperiled young saint from Kyu-shu!

Carène turned her cheek, and kissed him.

The churning spray sang the refrain,

"'Pour un peu d'amour, un peu d'amour,
Cet instant divin, mais bien trop court!"

Carène's indiscretion was topped by an effervescent laugh.

"Voila! I have control of the wheel, Monseigneur Madrigal!" she exclaimed, in astonishment.

To show him that she spoke the truth, she turned the boat about, in eddies of plashing water—and sped homeward, through ridges snowy and high.

"It is as good as a lamb!" she exclaimed, naïvely, of the motor-boat. "Whatever possessed it? I've never known it to act that way before. It gave us a perilous second. But, *n'importe,* no harm is done. *N'est-ce-pas?"*

The boat flew down the river.

"It might be possible," with soft gravity, "that our ghosts had some amusement because of our dangerous second. One ghost may have said to another ghost, "Ah, they are all alike—saint and sinner.'" She sighed and lapsed into musing.

"And, it might be," she added, at length, still grave, "that if ever, under cherry blossoms, a young saint encounters a young sinner, he may hesitate to put his heel upon her cheek—knowing himself to be but a man, Monseigneur."

III

The rest of the ride was made in silence. The Bishop resumed his erect posture in the cushions, hair blowing up from his forehead a bit wildly.

At the landing, Hemp, the boatman, came out to moor the craft.

Carène gave her hand to the Bishop, who assisted her from the boat. In silence, they walked along the pier. They ascended the tiers of stone steps,

described the circles of white concrete, and passed from the shadowy Park.

On reaching the apartment, they found that Pompey had returned.

His mother was better of her heart-seizure, Pompey explained, in relief; she had dismised her five children with a good-night kiss.

Carène placed a satin toe on the fire-fender.

"Dear *belle-mère,*" she smiled, "I love her heart.

She slipped a hand into the pocket of her cloak and drew out the fragments of her medallion.

"My trinket fell from the balcony, and was broken," she told Pompey.

She began to toss bits of ivory into the fire.

"The Bishop and I went to find it. Then we went for a sail on the river."

Strands of her finespun hair curled in the glow of the purling fire, as she dropped into it the painted atoms of ivory.

Pompey had a word of sympathy for Carènes' broken heirloom, and a word of enthusiasm for motor-boating in the moonlight. Pompey was an all-around sportsman; he enjoyed anything healthy and vigorous. He extended an invitation for a criuse the next evening to the Bishop of Kyu-shu.

But the Bishop was leaving Manhattan in the morning. And, as the hour was something late, he soon deemed it wise to take leave.

He shook Pompey Gilfoil's hand, expressing a hope that he might entertain him some day in Kyu-shu. His manner in saying good-bye to the sylph with drooping orchids at her waist was remote and shy.

"Adieu, Monseigneur Madrigal," said Carène. *"Bon voyage."*

She barely concealed a yawn.

Pompey accompanied his dinner-guest to the hall. Stevens put the Bishop into his outer coat and civilly presented him his hat, closing the door automatically on the dignitary.

Pompey strolled back to the drawing room, sleepy. At the fire-fender, he kissed his young wife good-night; with the heartfelt devotion that made him resemble his mother, who, when lonely, summoned her children to be kissed. He went off to bed, whistling.

Carène sat in the window-seat overlooking the Park and the river. The corn-colored curtains hardly stirred The breeze was dying with the moon. The river was running mistily. The sounds of the night were tempered. Fair, disordered head against the window-frame, Carène stripped her hands of their jewels, in a mood of meditation.

Half sadly, she wished herself a young saint.



NO physical exercises yet discovered can compare for a moment with silk stockings for giving an erect carriage to the female head.



WHEN waiting for a man, you wait until he comes. When waiting for a woman, you wait to see if she comes at all.



THE man who moralizes is generally a hypocrite; the woman who moralizes is invariably plain.

THE ALIMENTARY ROUTE

By Helen Drake

WHEN a man is well fed he will propose.

* * *

I had heard from childhood that a man could be won if you served him an appetizing meal.

I determined to win the man I loved in this manner.

I learned to cook.

I invited him to dinner.

Mother discharged our cook; I cooked the dinner.

The duck was so savory that his hand trembled as he dug his fork into it.

He ate nine biscuits that looked like puffs of snow flecked with molten gold.

His face glowed when I brought on a salad topped with mayonnaise, yellow as pollen.

"Delicious!" he said, and my heart pounded with joy.

* * *

When a man is well fed he will propose. . .

While I was serving the demi-tasse the man proposed to my sister.



CHIMNEYS

By Stephen Huguenot

MY window looks across a field
Of leaping chimney-stalagmites;
And some by others are concealed,
And some arise to splendid heights;
And over every house and tree
There hangs a gas barrage of coke;
But one small stack blows up to me
A wistful question-mark of smoke.

I cannot see the folks who light
The fires beneath this masque of flues;
Their cats by day, their deeds by night,
Nor what the brand of coke they use:
But from a window just below
One little stack, most every day,
There looks a girl I do not know,
Who quickly turns her head away.

THE METHOD OF TRIAL AND ERROR

By Laura Kent Mason

YESTERDAY I took luncheon with Cornelia. And while we lunched I solved a mystery about her. Not that there was anything really mysterious—but Cornelia, well, Cornelia is different. As for my solution—she was in one of those oddly confidential moods that even the most discreet women indulge in, unexpectedly—all I did was to nod or fill in pauses with the appropriate "yes" or "no."

I don't feel that I'm exploiting Cornelia to tell what she told me. Although Cornelia probably will not tell it again for some, I think she is glad it is told. She did not pledge me to secrecy, in fact she seemed rather proud of herself, as if, in solving her own problems, she had very cleverly pointed the way in the problems of hundreds of other women, a shining arrow toward freedom.

I've known Cornelia since she was eighteen, the year before she came out. Now, Cornelia must be about twenty-nine, but she has kept most of the attractions of her girlhood. She is a little under medium height and slender, with a pale, oval face and immense dark eyes. Cornelia never uses rouge, but she keeps her skin always quite powdery, her mouth red and moist-looking, and her eyebrows narrow and dark. Cornelia's hair is brown and sleek and she pulls it very severely away from her face. She has awfully good taste in clothes, she knows how to buy little hats with just the right tilt to them and manages to look severe and trim out of doors, but goes in for rather bizarre house frocks and evening gowns. Usually she wears black or white or grey with effective touches of combinations of green and purple. But the thing that makes Cornelia stand out from the thousands is a sort of a gayness, a buoyancy and lightness of spirit, an inner glittering always ready to peep out.

Cornelia was still in school when I first met her, but she was having a mighty good time, even then, going to all sorts of informal, permissible parties, always accompanied by a good-looking youth or two. Some sleek, bright-eyed boy was always adjusting her coat or putting on her skates or bringing her tea.

Cornelia made her début at a dinner dance her aunt, her mother's older sister, Mrs. Lucy Paxton, gave for her at Sherry's. Mrs. Truman Blair was her father's only sister, so it was taken for granted that Cornelia would be entertained a lot and that she would be one of the most popular girls of the season. The Grants weren't rich, as you count money these days, but their house with its big living rooms and huge fireplaces was an ideal place to entertain young people. The slight shabbiness of the furniture made you feel more at home than in one of the newly done houses with heavy hangings and rigid correctness.

Cornelia was even more popular than her most envious friends had been afraid of. Practically every débutante is supposed to have the pick of half a dozen eligibles, even when she clutches at the very first proposal from any man who has any sort of an income or position. Cornelia really had quite a lot of chances at matrimony, but she didn't accept any of them. She spent her first and her second winters having a good

time. She did enjoy things so. Even the stupidest musical comedy seemed fun to Cornelia. She could giggle so at the comedian. At a drama she'd have to wipe her eyes, surreptitiously turning toward the darkest corner of the box, at the least touch of sentiment or tragedy. Each dinner, each supper, each dance seemed something splendidly new and worth while. Life was full of good times.

Perhaps a dozen girls, far less attractive than Cornelia, married and settled down into various stages of domesticity. Cornelia played around, always a good-looking man or two at her heels, rides in the park, teas at the Ritz or the Plaza or some of the smaller tea places, promenades in the Avenue and calls on fair afternoons, dinner engagements every evening or a few people in, informal dances, the theater. Cornelia's people were a little afraid that she'd turn into one of those unique girls that a modern civilization has created, too popular and fickle to marry, who allow inferior members of their sex to pick off all of their own pet eligibles and who, at thirty-five or so, sink into a semi-sporty, semi-successful-career of bachelor-girlhood, sometimes between a joke and a personage.

But, when she was twenty-one. Cornelia met Harley Gresham. Harley had been in England since Cornelia's début, but he came back, then, to stay. It was love at first sight, I believe, so far as there is such a thing. At once, Cornelia and Harley began going everywhere together. You'd find Harley at the Grants every aftetrnoon at tea time, unless you saw the two of them somewhere else. Cornelia's people gave a sigh of relief, and, when the engagement was aannounced, their blessings. Harley wasn't rich, not as rich as they had hoped the husband of Cornelia might be. But his family was irreproachable and he, himself, was a mighty likeable young fellow.

Some people thought Harley Gresham too handsome, but there are always those who are not satisfied with unflawed perfection. His beauty just bordered on effeminacy without being disagreeable. He was just a trifle over medium height and as slender as Cor- His hair was a little lighter than hers, as were his eyes, which were long and narrow. But his skin was becomingly sunburned nearly all the time and his face was quite lean and wide-awake and attractive.

After a few months of being engaged, months which seemed to be flowing over with good times—everyone gave parties for them and took, as payment, the eager pleasure the young couple had in their entertainment—Cornelia and Harley were married, quietly, and went to California for a six months' honeymoon. When they came back, for Harley had to go to work—it seemed he was with a large brokerage firm—they took a rather modest apartment near Cornelia's parents, filled it with the wedding presents and the few necessary basic things that wedding guests neglect to supply and went to housekeeping.

II

They seemed ideally happy. We spoke of them as "the happy couple" or "those young Greshams" and the new younger set took great delight in asking Cornelia to chaperone their affairs. The chaperone always seemed to have the best time of anyone. She personified careless youth and joy.

Cornelia and Harley were practically always together, the ideal "happy couple." Occasionally, you'd see Cornelia at lunch with one of her many old friends or having tea with some rejected suitor, but she always seemed preoccupied, a bit indifferent. When she was with Harley she was as delighted and as full of happiness over little things as she had been at every novelty her first season out. The two of them bubbled and glowed.

That is, Cornelia and Harley seemed ideally happy for the first two or maybe three years. Then, quite gradually, we couldn't help notice the change. It seemed incredible to us, knowing Cor-

nelia, but Cornelia was bored. And Harley seemed bored, too. The buoyancy and lightness and gladness that had made them seem so splendidly young gradually disappeared. They didn't start going with anyone else. They didn't "drift apart." They went everywhere together except to odd luncheons and teas. Neither of them seemed to pay more than the most superficial attention to anyone else. It was just with themselves that something seemed wrong—as if a flame had been snuffed out.

Another year passed and things were even worse with them. Dining with "the young Greshams" was just like dining anywhere else—a good dinner, nicely served, the usual little chatter about nothing, at the head and foot of the table a rather bored young couple with big, tragic eyes, who were immensely polite to each other and to their guests, who said just the right things in the right way, but not at all the Cornelia and Harley who had meant laughter, almost giggles, clever repartee, flashes of light, impudence.

Then, when the Greshams had been married about four years and Cornelia was only twenty-five, we heard that they had separated. We tried not to believe it at first—it had seemed as if they could patch things up—most people get bored after a few years of matrimony. Harley went West on business, the little apartment was closed and Cornelia went to live with her parents. The next year Cornelia got a divorce. Harley had given her real cause for it, according to Cornelia's lawyers, who named one of those indefinite persons who are always being named in divorce proceedings. We couldn't imagine how Harley could have been interested in such a person, knowing Cornelia. That hadn't been it—there was something else, of course. We knew that. For years there had been something. It wasn't the cheap co-respondent or Harley's having known her.

Cornelia went back into the life of her crowd. Gradually, some of her gaiety and delight in things came back, too. Not as much as before. But once more there was always a new man at her heels, and her repartee, a little sharper, as her chin was a trifle sharper, earned her a new reputation for cleverness that her marriage had almost taken away.

Another year and, quite unexpectedly, Cornelia married again. This marriage left us all gasping—and with far different emotions than her first marriage had. For Cornelia married Joseph Hill Stevenson. He is just the man I wouldn't have picked out for her. In the first place, Stevenson is forty or older. He is a splendid character, of course, and all that—one of those "examples to young men." He made all of his money himself. He started in a very humble position, in the great collar factory which he now owns. Of course he could give Cornelia everything she could ask for, but then Cornelia's happiness had never seemed to depend on money. We remembered those first years of her marriage, when happiness seemed to surround Cornelia and Harley with a golden aura. And now Cornelia had married Joseph Hill Stevenson.

Stevenson was rather fat, a respectable fatness, to be sure, more stout than tubby. His hair had receded well back on his head and was crisply waved and grey. His skin was rather red and coarse. He was slow and heavy-minded. He laughed, deeply, at obvious things. How could Cornelia help comparing him to Harley and this marriage with her first years of being in love?

I think we all felt sorry for Cornelia, a comforting sort of sorrow, the kind one feels toward a little girl who has broken her favorite doll and is trying, so bravely, to go on playing with the second best and pretending not to mind. Cornelia seemed serenely unaware of our sympathy. She settled down into a correct hostess of the home Stevenson bought in the East Seventies. She took great pains with the decorations—I saw her spend an hour discussing the desirability of two pieces of grey taffeta with her decorator. She was taking a sin-

cere and eager interest in the library hangings.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hill Stevenson entertained with many correct dinners. They went together to the theater and the opera. They were popular, sought after. Cornelia seemed to have a good time at parties, too, not with the carefree buoyancy of her young girlhood, nor with the happy lightness of her early married life, but with charm and eagerness and evident contentment. We heaved a sigh. Had we been mistaken about Cornelia, after all? Was she just an ordinary person who had fooled us with false gaiety, and who, now, after an unfortunate marriage, had settled comfortably into a usual young matronhood?

Then, six months ago, Harley Gresham came home. He came home to stay, he told everyone, and took rooms in Madison Avenue. And, somehow, because Cornelia had settled down into such colorless respectability, it never occurred to me that Harley's return might affect her seriously. I don't think any of us thought of it.

I heard that they were seeing each other. Even that didn't seem to mean a great deal. It was a few months ago that I first saw Cornelia and Harley together, having tea in a quaint little tea-room near the park. I had stopped in with Phillip, who is always too ready for tea and toast. There they were, at a little painted table, acting as if they were sixteen. I've never seen such frank joy on the face of anyone over twelve, to be more accurate. They were taking absolutely no pains to conceal their pleasure in each other, though of course they were quiet and well-bred enough about it. If you had never seen them before you might not have noticed anything extraordinary. Their whole table seemed surrounded with their old aura of gladness. Cornelia was using her little-girl giggle. Each tiny sandwich seemed an unheard-of wonder. Harley, lounging gracefully—he is the type that is always in graceful poses—watched every one of her tiny motions. They both waved to us and smiled a bit self-consciously. Cornelia even winked, the broad wink of a school-boy, and then they went on with their little joys as if the tea-room and the rest were leagues away.

I saw them frequently after that, driving in the park, having tea together, meeting at their friends' homes with an absurdly grotesque pretence of surprise. Yet, all the time, Cornelia was being a dutiful and correct married woman, hostess at numerous correct dinners—where Harley was a frequent guest—attending to her household duties and her servants, going to the many affairs that came to her as routine things. And yet, when you saw her and Harley together . . .

That's why I wondered, why I felt that there was a mystery about Cornelia. She couldn't love Joseph Stevenson, that seemed certain. Yet she was quite nice to him, always. They seemed content when you saw them out together, and I knew they spent many quiet evenings at home. Yet Cornelia and Harley—one glance at them, their two interested, eager faces, quite close together, their laughter, their evident joy in being together, and you knew how they felt. Yet if Cornelia had loved Harley, why had she left him—why hadn't they been happy? We never believed any more of the co-respondent than the law required. If Cornelia loved Harley now, why didn't she leave Stevenson? Still, if she had married Stevenson because she cared for him, why did she act this way about Harley? And yet Cornelia kept on—I couldn't help wondering. Yesterday, when I took luncheon with Cornelia, she told me.

III

Cornelia had glanced at her wrist as we began our salad.

"Must hurry," she said; "here, it's nearly two. I've got millions of things to do, and I'm to meet Harley at half-past four."

Her face lit up into a most mischievous smile.

"Harley—you act as if it's a most delicious treat."

"It is, of course."

"And yet—?"

"Yet—what?"

"When you and Harley—"

"Oh, be a good one. Don't preach. You remind me of my aunts. Preaching's a horrid habit, old dear."

"I shan't preach. What right have I? Only you'll admit you are rather odd."

"Me odd? I'm most un-odd. It's the others, who don't do things like me, who are odd. If I were only odd or different, some other arrangement might do—might have done. It's only because I'm so conventional, usual. Don't you see?"

"I'm stupid—I'm afraid I don't."

"You don't understand about Harley and me?"

She gave one of her delicious, very-young-girl giggles. It's then, I think, she decided to be a flaming arrow to other young married people.

"I've always loved Harley, of course—only, don't you see, I shouldn't have loved him—first—or married him."

"I don't understand yet."

"Well, Harley is someone to be in love with, not to marry. That's all there is to it! He isn't a husband—the husband type, I mean. See now?"

There was a faint glimmer. I nodded.

"One shouldn't marry Harleys. It's like expecting butterflies to pull milk wagons. I'm different. I'm a woman. Women marry. They get used to marrying, having done it for thousands of years. You've got to have someone to go home to, a solid background. But Harley isn't the type women marry. Harleys don't marry, or oughtn't.

"I was mad over Harley from the first time I saw him. Marriage—I was young and didn't understand. Harley is the type to love and meet—dear little secret meetings. But imagine eating *marrons glacés* for breakfast!

"Being married to Harley was awful, for both of us. We thought we liked it at first—a sort of a game. Gradually—

"Oh, it wasn't Harley. I got tired first. Harley should be a treat, not a habit. Harley likes perfect things. I don't blame him. He's the sort that can have them. But imagine being perfect—all the time—when you wake up in the morning—late at night—when you're headachy. Imagine trying to make everything in life, in routine living, an exciting episode.

"Before being married, it was awfully jolly, meeting unexpectedly during the day or even doing little planned things. We'd save things to tell each other when we met. I could always have a different mood for him and he for me. But even Harley couldn't be good company steadily. Ugh, I'll never forget, as the days passed—and we grew used to being together. Imagine having to discuss household things—that *must* be discussed *some* time—or money—with Harley! Seeing him day after day, all kinds of weather—talking about weather, even—do you wonder I thought I was through?

"We tried separating. I took a couple of trips with Mother, and Harley went away on business several times. It didn't do. We always felt the obligations pulling. If we could have had separate establishments—but even that wouldn't have answered, with Harley.

"So, when we couldn't stand it any longer—well, you know. The divorce was awful, of course. We hated that part. But it was like a needed operation, I guess. We recovered.

"Then I met Joseph. You don't understand this, I know. But I bet there are women who do! As soon as I met him, I knew. Just think—a man who'd never had a nickname—always Joseph or Mr. Stevenson. He carried with him the feeling of solidity, of domestic contentment. He actually wanted to be settled. Joseph was a born husband. See now? He's the husband type. That's all—I married him.

"Of course I like Joseph—love him, in a nice, wifely, breakfasty way. He's perfectly content. I'm as content as I'll ever be. Joseph adores discussing household things. We expect to bore

each other. He loves formal dinners—he's always bringing in most impossible people—to 'show off' his home and his wife. So you see—"

"But does he—know about Harley?" I ventured. Things weren't quite clear.

"Oh, in a way. Why be so stupidly definite? Joseph knows I care for him. I left Harley because we weren't happy and married him, didn't I? He's a husband. Don't you see? Husbands expect wives to have little affairs, amusements. He's busy during the day, he's interested in his business. He's awfully jealous, of course. That adds to the zest. But all husbands are. But he has the usual, husband-like conceit and believes that he comes first. The perfect husband.

"Even before Harley came back I understood. Harley did, too. Our error was, you see, in meeting too soon. We should have been introduced just about now. We're making the best of it. All of the glamour of secret meetings, of little unexpected joys, has come back. We can save up things to tell each other. We're being wicked, naughty, modern. Harley is wonderful in his own way—a perfect lover type, that's all."

Cornelia finished her parfait and looked at her watch again.

"Now I must run. I've got to try on a frock at Bendel's and see about having some new candles made—it's so hard to get that hand-dipped kind in the right shades—and I simply mustn't be late for tea . . ."

POETIC MADNESS

By Carl Glick

I WROTE as one inspired.
It was a poem dedicated to her . . . comparing her eyes to stars, her hair to wind-swept tresses, and her soul to the glow of worlds new-born.
I hoped it would please her.
I said in my letter, "For only your eyes is this poem written. In all the world there is but one copy. It shall never be published. But I shall hint that this my masterpiece, exists. It will be a matter of literary mystery. And should this one copy never be found, it will be lost to the world forever."

When I met her, I expected a reward.
But she would not speak to me.
Had I offended her by the poem?
I trembled.

Without a word she handed me the poem. . .
It was the carbon copy!

LUIS—AND AN EPISODE

By Muna Lee

AT first resentment possessed her. It was unfair. She had earned all that life offered through Luis. A dozen bitter cinematographic memories of childhood flickered through her mind. With particular vividness she recalled a purchase of gray knitted gloves on a windy Fall afternoon. She felt again the pure joy of pulling them on over stiff chapped fingers; the æsthetic delight in their grayness among so many buffs and reds. She thought flinchingly of the eternal struggle at home to keep the younger children supplied with shoes and pencils; of her father's unrewarded ideals; of her mother's twisted hand.

Surely she had deserved to find some relief from this. She was young, and circumstances had denied her youth: until, with a sudden grandiloquence of gesture, Chance had flung open a door, and Life stretched out before her, after all those rigid years, beautiful and understandable, bewildering only in the sudden multiplicity of its promises, the romance and color bent down to her grasp. And now with equal suddenness, the world had again become a tangle, a rough maze.

Perhaps she had been too eager to accept joy, too ready to believe in it. Perhaps her attitude had tempted fate. She had not denied to herself for a moment that she was glad to give up the struggle, to relax fibres grown accustomed to tension. Incontestably, no one had ever turned with greater willingness from a battle unwon, a task incomplete. But was not that life's inevitable demand of women? She had been perfectly willing to devote herself to Luis's variable demands; to submerge her own personality in his if necessary. She had not doubted nor did she doubt her ability to make him happy. She had been fair to Luis; it would have been so easy, would still be so easy, for him to marry a woman who would render him miserable. Why then should she reproach herself because every nerve of her spirit had rejoiced to be relieved of the strain that now had to begin again; all for an idea, a revolt within her own mind? All, in short, for an afternoon with Robert Clark.

At the thought, a sudden wonder swept her that she had not foreseen something of this that night when she first met them both. It was Luis whom she had looked forward to meeting. It was Robert Clark whose personality had called to her like a voice across the crowded room. She remembered how he had smiled down on her as he verified her name, and how, when Alice Ferrer had asked with cheerful insolence, "Well, what do you think of the young lady?" he questioned slowly:

"That she must be very loyal in her beliefs, and rather deliberate in her judgment."

She remembered, too, how he had left soon after, long before anyone else, and Luis had crossed over to her side. After that there was little to remember but Luis, Luis, Luis: Luis with his extravagant promises, his unfailing response to her mood, his passion and tenderness and absurd jealousies: Luis laying down his salad fork to say with great earnestness:

"We must learn to know each other; talk to me about God!"

Luis tracing in his palm the outline

of his beloved *cerro;* Luis sombrely demanding forgiveness because his first kiss had been given to a woman with false teeth; Luis relating with gusto a colorful and highly irreverent anecdote about his British great-grandmother; Luis speaking rapidly with blurred s's in one of his delightful and tempestuous angers. It was very pretty to think of Luis. There was no imperfect memory of him. He was preëminently the lover of whom one dreams without much faith that he will ever come true; and he had come true for her. Glamour and romance were made for him; but she reminded herself also, with great respect, of the simplicity and Latin directness that frequently pierced his moods. If it had seemed at times that they played a fascinating game in which the prize would go to the nimblest wit, she had nevertheless recognized his underlying sincerity; and she had loved him. The make-believe had realized itself. Even at first she had not hesitated, nor doubted for long; if love had seemed an easier and gayer thing than she had expected it to be, that had been adequately explained by her lack of experience.

At that, love had not proved more different from her conception than any other aspect of life. If there had been any pretense with Luis, it was pretense that deceived herself as well. That first evening when he exclaimed impetuously, "We have something to say to each other?" the mystery and magic of youth had surged around them, overpowering their will to speak.

Next evening he had burst out with that amazing and unpremeditated proposal of immediate marriage.

"But you have never seen me with my hat off?" she protested, and tossing it aside had lifted her face to the light, laughing, as he leaned to her lips. She recalled her apprehensive question, "What will you tell your family of me?" and the gay confidence of his answer:

"That you are a little Uruguayan girl who happened to be born in North America."

II

After that there had been no apprehensions. She had refused deliberately even to question herself. Those stars that fought against Sisera had formed a beneficent alliance. What charm he possessed, what persuasion! Could anyone else have won her father from stronghold after stronghold of his opposition: race, family, religion? Or have fully convinced her mother? How easy and pleasant life had seemed! How grateful it had been to realize that always, so long as she lived, she should be petted, sheltered, appealed to, cared for! The people, the things, the places she had longed to make her own would be hers now. Luis as lover, Luis as husband—she had grown in self-confidence with her confidence of the future.

Even when his pride had sent him to war, she had not been afraid. He would be safe enough. The gods always looked out for him.

It would have been the reasonable and natural thing to wait until he came for her, to marry him, to take up the romance of life in the Banda Oriental. For a moment she wavered toward the belief that Robert Clark's coming had been an injustice.

It was like him, and as unlike Luis as possible, to come unannounced, a year after their one meeting, absolutely sure of her welcome. Chance granted them an afternoon of perfect weather. The empty park through which they wandered might have been a Shakespearean woodland — with carefully grouped trees, and at intervals great clumps of crimson and shell-pink gladioli, absurdly out of place and tremendously effective—while they kept silence or talked freely of the Eastern assignment on account of which he was sailing the next week.

"How long will you be gone?" she had asked, and wondered to find herself stricken dumb when he answered:

"Perhaps four years."

It had been a long afternoon. They had walked, had made pretense of looking over the notes for his next article,

and had spoken freely at first and afterwards with some hesitancy of Luis.

When they stopped to watch a metallic sunset flaming above an expanse of damp gray weeds he looked at her with a smile.

"You are very fine," he commented.

"And you—are like Odin and Thor!" she replied shakily.

"So-o?" he said with a characteristic deep intonation; and for an electric moment they stared at each other unsmilingly.

As they turned away, he pointed out a clump of asters to remark on their likeness to the Shasta daisies of a suburban backyard that had been his years ago. She could hardly credit the wave of jealousy that swept her—she who had laughed at Luis's incessant flirtations! For Robert Clark's wife, diffident, gentle, obviously of another generation, she felt no more than an affectionate comprehension. But that backyard—she could not bear to think that he had looked at it morning after morning, rising early perhaps to water the daisies, entirely content and supremely unaware of her existence.

They found a rocky ledge to their liking, and he leaned back against an elm-trunk with a lazy question:

"Why don't you take off your hat?"

She laid it aside obediently, and began picking a cluster of asters to bits, while he watched with patent disapproval until she caught his glance and threw the flowers away, flushing.

They were silent for a while, content, absolutely devoid of self-consciousness. Essentially their understanding was complete. Lightly, he put his arm around her. The gesture was a question which she considered gravely. Luis—she realized suddenly and completely that she need not consider Luis. Deliberately she leaned back against Robert Clark's shoulder. Yet, yielding to his arm, her face half-hidden against his coat, with one hand she shielded her cheek. He brushed her hair with his lips contentedly, until at last she raised her face and their lips met in a long kiss. It left her curiously surprised and shaken. She had never been kissed like that before, she thought incoherently. It was a man's kiss, something third personal and meanly analytical in her mind explained; Luis was her own age or a year or so older. His lips sought hers again and analysis fled, defeated.

An insistent clamor in her brain voiced itself at last.

"There is nothing wrong in what I feel for you," she said, challengingly.

His arm tightened around her and he looked across the gray weeds.

"We are fools if we let this go," he said.

She found no answer to the assertion because for the moment she believed passionately that it was true. He rose with her in his arms and walked toward the top of the hillock. She wondered vaguely at the ease with which he carried her; and, half afraid and supremely happy, she felt that she worshipped his strength. She realized with a flash of comprehension that she should never know a greater happiness than this, to cling to his shoulder as he stumbled through a pile of brush toward the hilltop.

It was difficult to remember what they had said. He had spoken once abruptly,

"It may get pretty cold on the steppes and the hunger may get pretty bad, but sometimes at intervals of hours, always at intervals of days, I shall remember this afternoon with you."

And when she protested, very much as she had protested with Luis,

"But you do not even know me!" he replied with soft violence,

"I do not know you? I know you better than some who think they know you!" Then in a moment:

"When I come back I may find you loving another man, and there can be only a word and a handclasp between us; but even with that I shall understand."

To which she cried out in passionate denial:

"You know I will love you always!"

And he asked curtly:

"What else could you think?"

He had kissed her again, swift, hard kisses that shook her hair over her shoulders so that he buried his face in its softness, and he had asked wistfully, touching her with heart-break for his loneliness.

"Doesn't this mean something? Don't you believe it is something big?"

Again she told him fiercely:

"You know that I love you! I would rather have you doubt your love for me than doubt that!"

And this time he agreed:

"You will love me if I don't lie to you, and if I don't make demands."

This was too true to refute. Because it was true she hated the world and all the people in it and wished suddenly that she were dead. Above all she hated herself. It was grotesque, incredible, that she should withhold any happiness from him. It was horrible. She could not comprehend God.

He understood what was in her mind, for in a moment he said quietly:

"I don't make any demands, dear."

III

THAT was all. They had gone home, and he had sailed for Archangel and she should not see him again for four years—she should never really see him again. She did not deceive herself. He had loved her that afternoon and would always love her, but life would not be materially different to him even though they did not meet again. Individuals counted for little with him, after all. It made no difference. He had given her what she had craved and had despaired of finding—something to believe in. He was a type of that strength of which she had dreamed; she felt she could say her prayers to it. She had thought that only Death could be trusted, that only Death was absolutely sure; and because she thought that, it had been easy to turn her back on reality when Luis called. That evasion was no longer possible. It gave her a fierce joy to make the deliberate choice of pain and struggle and ultimate defeat. Life denied her Robert Clark and she denied herself Luis: very well then, she would find out what meanings life had left. At least she was done with compromise. She could even feel glad now that love had no lesser joy to give her than that one joy of love itself. Her first vague resentment against circumstance vanished like a mist.

She thought of Luis and his rage and wonder. She was sorry for Luis—she was reminiscently sorry for Montevideo and the Banda Oriental. But for Robert Clark and herself she was suddenly not sorry in the least.

THE TRUE BELIEVER

By T. F. Mitchell

HE was a man of simple life and simple virtues. His predominant characteristic was faith. His faith was supreme. They tell a very beautiful story about him. When his wife fell off the fishing pier he sat there an hour patiently waiting for her to come up.

"THE HONORARY PALL-BEARERS WERE—"

By S. N. Behrman

I

SUDDENLY Gresham became conscious that he was smiling. Something like panic overcame him. He compressed his lips tightly.

He should not have come. He should have refused to come. And yet what could he do? It had all happened so suddenly. And Mannerson had specifically asked for him.

As he stood stiffly waiting for the actual pall-bearers to carry Mannerson past him into the church, he caught a glimpse of several men with cameras on the curb, busily clicking away. From the corner of his eye he stole a glimpse of the bare-headed, frock-coated men beside him. Mannerson was one of the most powerful editors in the country, a man much feared and respected. Here, among the honorary pall-bearers, were men of light and learning; an ex-Secretary of State, a political boss, a publisher, old Danvers, sometime dramatic critic, who now spent his time writing endless volumes of theatrical reminiscence. . . It was like Mannerson to have Danvers for a pall-bearer. Gresham could imagine Mannerson saying to himself:

"Yes, I'll have old Danvers there—he'll represent literature. . . !"

That was a slightly malicious thought. For he, Gresham, younger by twenty years than anyone of the chosen twelve, was there by Mannerson's forethought. Doubtless Mannerson had said: "Yes—I'll have Gresham. It'll help him to have his name mentioned with Ellison Sear's and Gregory Salter's and Mark Senner's and that crowd. . . ."

Doubtless Mannerson had thought that. Well, it was the end. This was Mannerson's last kindness. Gresham asked himself why he wasn't more grateful. Everything he had he owed to Mannerson. And he had wronged Mannerson . . . wronged him deeply. . . .

His eyes wandered to the mourners' carriages drawn up behind the hearse. At any rate Elsie had not come. She was too overcome, she had told them. That was wise of Elsie. That both of them should be present—that would have been too much . . . !

II

THE emotions which the preceding ceremonies had been unable to wake were stirred into being by Chopin's Funeral March nobly played by the organist. As the pall-bearers marched down the aisle the stately rhythms pealed through the great church, filling it. Yet, in spite of the music, perverse little thoughts flicked across Gresham's mind. In front of him walked Mark Senner. Senner was the Financial Editor of Mannerson's paper. He was a little, bent man, with a wizened face and a bushy mustache. It was well for Senner, Gresham reflected, that men had invented the funeral sinecure whose function he was now discharging. The work of literal pall-bearing would have crushed him. . . So with most of these others for that matters. Old men!

The march down the aisle took an in-

terminable time. As the slow seconds passed the swelling waves of the triumphal dirge produced a sort of hypnosis in Gresham. He felt himself moving in a lucid dream. . . . It had that kind of strangeness—like waking suddenly in the night to think of people everywhere lying inert and prone in little, dark rooms. . . What a curious scene! And he, Gresham, was taking part in it. He was an honorary pall-bearer! He felt himself again about to smile but, by an effort of the will, he managed to put all thought of the situation out of his mind. He listened to the music. That sobered him, calmed him. . .

Finally Mannerson reached the altar, where he reposed. Gresham found himself in a front pew, between Senner and the ex-Secretary of State. The ex-Secretary was a large man, with a shiny bald head and a vast expanse of forehead. He remembered the time when the spectacle of an ex-Secretary of State would have awed him slightly. He even remembered the time when he had been afraid of Mannerson. . . Most people were afraid of Mannerson. But from the first he had concealed his own timidity beneath a show of bravado that Mannerson had somehow liked. So Mannerson had helped him along, given him chances, put him on the broad road. But Gresham had always resented Mannerson—his power, his rudeness, his way of doling out favors. Even latterly, when he had basked in the sun of the "Chief's" favor, he had resented the radiations from the kindly luminary. He did not know fully why. It was a fact. Even, it had colored his relations with Elsie.

He had resented deeply Mannerson's second marriage. It wasn't so much that he had been himself fond of Elsie; it was that Mannerson had married her as he dictated editorial policy, with a gallant ruthlessness, a suave disregard of any one else as a possible rival for something he wanted. Gresham might be his friend but he could never be his equal—that irked Gresham endlessly. Well, he had beaten Mannerson out at last. And Mannerson would be forever unaware. . .

Somehow, as he dwelt on that thought, it was not altogether pleasing to him, it was not the sense of his own safety but of Mannerson's inviolability that obtruded, irritatingly.

III

The organ pealed out its massive threnody and came to a close, leaving the church full of after-sound which died away, too. Gresham was sorry. Now there would be a eulogy by someone with a thin voice. But the voice was not thin. It was unctuous, oleaginous. . . Gresham was annoyed. . . Why, he himself could say better things than that about Mannerson. . . "Rectitude!"—Rot! Mannerson would have been the last to take that high line about himself. Mannerson was a powerful man with big interests and he knew how to protect himself. No one could defend himself better than Mannerson, no one could attack better. And no one knew better than he whom to attack. . ."Public servant. . ." Rot again! He remembered Mannerson's privately uttered aphorism: "An editor's opinions must not rise above the intellectual level of his advertising man." No. Mannerson wasn't deceived about himself—much. . .

The voice droned on. Gresham thought that if he ever had a funeral like this — which was unlikely unless he changed mightily — he would have, instead of eulogistic inanities, a musical programme. That idea rather pleased Gresham. Suppose, instead of that babble, that they would just play something, something moving and noble. Great waves of sound rolling majestically through the church, furling the coffin. Nothing "got" you the way music did; it might divert even an honorary pall-bearer from the thought of his name in the morning paper. As it was, that was what Gresham chiefly thought of; he knew the list by heart:

"The Honorary Pall-Bearers are:

Ellison Sears, Gregory Salter, Mark Senner, Frank Gresham. . . ."

IV

SUDDENLY Gresham found himself thinking of Mannerson, thinking of his burly, slightly bent figure as he would come down the corridor by Gresham's office, walking very slowly, his shoulder brushing the wire-netting of the "morgue"—newspaper argot for the clipping files.

He had aged quickly within the year and he carried his head bent lower than ever and walked with his eyes fastened to the ground. Every night between five and six Gresham and the others would bring their stuff to him. Between half-past six and seven Gresham would hear the whirr of the bell in Mannerson's office summoning a boy to take the censored oracles to the composing-room. Then he would go to Mannerson. . .

Mannerson liked him to come in at this hour, to chat about things with him, while he smoked a cigar. After a time Mannerson would rise slowly and allow Gresham to help him on with his black, silk-lined overcoat. They would go down in the elevator together and, when he had no other engagements, Mannerson would take him uptown in his car. He seemed to like Gresham to dine with him and Elsie.

"I'm not as gay as I used to be," he said one night to Gresham.

By one of the capriccios of memory the scenes at the office and at Mannerson's home faded and he saw himself sitting with Mannerson on the verandah of his summer place on Long Island. Mannerson had been in his most charming mood, full of talk about people and places. He had told of his early years in New York, how he had studied law, graduated with a brilliant record but never practiced.

"How does it happen you didn't stick to the law?" Gresham had asked, by way of manifesting an interest he didn't really feel.

He remembered how Mannerson laughed apologetically and waved his hand.

"I had the literary bee in my bonnet," he answered lightly. "I once wrote poems and things—as a young fellow will. . ."

Mannerson had referred to this period as an aberration for which he was not to be taken to account and Gresham had forgotten the remark. It was somehow too grotesque for credence. Mannerson—writing poetry! Mannerson the hard-headed conservative, Mannerson the unsentimental, the red-blooded and well-hated, "the hoarse voice of the vested interests," as the radical press called him.

But now, mysteriously, it was this remark which came suddenly out of the sub-cellars of Gresham's consciousness and glowed luminously in his mind. Mannerson had been young once! Somehow he, like everyone else, always thought of Mannerson as old, settled, a symbol of changeless stratification. But it seemed this wasn't true! Mannerson wasn't born with Draconian opinions—he had solidified. . . .

Gresham lifted his eyes to the heavy bronze coffin lying at the altar. Yes, that was Mannerson! But where was the other Mannerson? The Mannerson who had written poems "as a young fellow will." What had become of him? For the matter of that, what had become of himself, Gresham? He had not been slow himself about fitting in with the stream. But somehow he had always felt his own case different. As long as one kept conscious of the essential hollowness of one's professions, as long as one looked at the whole thing as a game—as you call pieces of wood kings and queens in chess—as long as in the center of the soul one kept outside, looking on—one might remain living, sensitive, free from ossification. But how did he know that Mannerson wasn't like that, really? That was absurd. But how did he know that he wouldn't become like Mannerson—a sort of intellectual and emotional mausoleum? He recalled with a start that the sight of his name in the papers that

morning in the company of men with national reputations had given him a certain thrill . . . !

It was happening already and he was only forty-three! It had happened! Already he was able to take pride in that most vacant of terrestial distinctions: Honorary Pall-Bearer. . .

V

GRESHAM looked about him miserably. . . . The preacher's words clanked upon his ears: "The management of a great newspaper entails the highest qualities of the mind and of the heart. . . ." The speaker paused impressively before disclosing what these qualities were; in the interval Gresham, who had once "covered" big funerals, wondered which of four or five stock qualities the man would mention first, "ability to feel the pulse of public opinion" or "great executive talent." The preacher chose the latter but followed immediately with the former.

"Poor Mannerson," said Gresham to himself, forgetting for the moment that Mannerson was no longer sentient. . . Mannerson had always so completely detested bores, especially sanctimonious ones.

Gresham lost himself again in thought of Mannerson. So he had written poetry once! It occurred to Gresham that if it were up to him to deliver the eulogy he would get up and say:

"Old Mannerson was a good businessman and built up one of the biggest advertising mediums in the country. You all know that. But there's something you don't know. Old Mannerson was young once. And, while Old Mannerson was young, he wrote poetry. It's true. He told me so himself. It was one July day, after a heavy lunch, when he was off his guard. I know it's hard to believe, but he did it. He wrote poetry. He sat in a room and toiled over words—Mannerson did. He made patterns of words, he tried to put them together so they would sound well and be beautiful. Sometimes he'd make rather a neat combination and he'd get a thrill—old Mannerson would. Being a poet he used words like rose and love and desire and pain. All young poets use words like that. Also he loved Shelley. I know it's hard to swallow that, but he must have because all young poets do. And he must have known by heart the Ode on a Grecian Urn. He must have loved the lines:

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

"He must have said those lines over and over to himself at night and thought of some girl and wished he could make up lines like that about her.

"But Mannerson gave up poetry. He married a girl who had enough money to buy a small paper with and in time Mannerson made it a big paper. But, of course, all that's comparatively unimportant, like his death. The important thing I've just told you, that he was young once and loved beautiful words and spent time putting 'em together for no reason at all."

That was the speech that Gresham, sitting in a front-pew at Mannerson's funeral, made up about Mannerson. Gresham liked the speech; he thought it would be a fine thing if he could get up there behind Mannerson and say it. There would be a lot of fun in that. It was really too bad that there was no possibility of that speech ever being delivered before this particular audience. What fun it would be to watch the ex-Secretary of State while he said it! What fun it would be to watch Senner's face while he referred to Mannerson's newspaper as comparatively unimportant! Senner thought that the world waited for his editorials to appear before it did anything. And—oh, yes—he would add this to the speech—a suggestion for an epitaph:

"And now, since I've told you the finest and the most important thing about Mannerson, let me respectfully suggest the following epitaph—Mannerson's own words, said to me lightly,

with half-indulgent shame, that summer's day. Let these words be graven on his tombstone:

"I wrote poetry once—as young fellows will. . . !"

That would be all. Gresham would stop the speech right there.

VI

It pleased Gresham to toy with this speculative oration. It pleased him to imagine himself delivering it, standing up there where the professional eulogist was now standing. What a delightful orgy it would be to deliver a speech like that! Gresham found himself inwardly chuckling. He actually repeated sentences from the speech over and over again in his mind, transposing words here and there to improve the effect. It would be worth nearly all it would cost to deliver a speech like that. . . !

And now the preacher was quoting the inevitable passage from "Julius Caesar" about the elements being mixed in him. That wasn't true, reflected Gresham icily. The elements were not mixed in Mannerson. He was singularly homogeneous. . . And yet there was Mannerson, in his mind's eye, sitting in a wicker-chair which his huge bulk distended, dressed in white flannels, waving his pudgy hand apologetically and saying:

"I had the literary bee. I wrote poetry once—as young fellows will."

And that was why Mannerson had given up the law! Gresham was angry at himself. Why had he allowed this confession to pass over him lightly as though it were without significance? Why hadn't he talked poetry to Mannerson? Why hadn't he asked him if he used to read Shelley, the glorious revolutionary? . . Of course Mannerson would not have told him. And he had probably forgotten. . . Poor Mannerson!

VII

What happens to honorary pall-bearers after the public ceremonies of a funeral is one of the minor mysteries of modern life. They rarely follow their vicarious charge beyond the church; their attendance ceases with the reporters' and the photographers'. At any rate Gresham, when Mannerson's motor had moved up the avenue, took advantage of the crowd to edge his way around the corner of the church and make his escape through a side-street. When he got clear of the crowd he almost ran. In Forty-second Street he went into a hotel for a drink.

The bartender, an old friend, looked at him curiously.

"Been to the old man's funeral, I see."

Gresham became conscious of his mortuary garments.

"Oh, yes," he said.

"Much of a crowd?" asked the bartender.

"Big," answered Gresham. He gulped his drink and fled.

On the sidewalk he looked at his watch. It was nearly three—time to go back to the office.

"But I've got to get off these clothes," he muttered.

He took a taxi to his rooms and, by dint of much haste, managed to reach his office within a half-hour. As he entered the great building he felt something strange about it, as though it had lost part of its personality.

On the top-story, on the way to his own office, he passed Senner. Senner had also changed his clothes and was fumbling hurriedly to get his key into the lock.

Once inside his cozy, familiar room, Gresham felt better. He took off his coat, switched on the desk-lamp and sat down. There was an editorial to write against a bill whose passage was inevitable and another denouncing a candidate for office whose election was assured.

Gresham worked hard, writing furiously. He was anxious to get through with this; to go outside again. He stole a look through the window. It had become suddenly dark; a fine drizzle was falling. He looked over

the endless expanse of roofs, roofs of theaters, grotesquely chimneyed, monotonous brownstone tenements, hotels. The spectacle made Gresham curiously happy; it was good to be alive in all this. . . .

As he worked, he thought of Mannerson. He thought of his empty office down the hall, with its massive desks and solid book-cases full of heavy works—on International Relations and Railroads and Economics. No poetry in Mannerson's room . . . ! Gresham thought it strange that the accidentally remembered remark should have left such an impression on him.

When he had finished his work he brought it in to Senner. As the oldest man on the staff next to Mannerson, Senner had taken temporary charge. Then Gresham went back to his office to get his hat and coat.

He lit a cigarette and stood for a moment by the window looking out over the crenellated outline of the roofs. Who would succeed Mannerson? Senner was the oldest; there were three other men who had been on the paper longer than he, but Gresham felt that there was a good chance that Mannerson had singled him out for the leadership. Gresham was young and not too young. It was quite possible that Mannerson—

His telephone rang. Annoyed at the interruption of his pleasant dreaming he answered it.

"Who?" he asked sharply. But his voice softened instantly. "Oh! Mrs. Mannerson's maid? . . Yes. How is she? Of course. I'll be right up. . . . If she's well enough to see me. . . . Very well, then. . . ."

He hung up the receiver and sat still a moment till he finished his cigarette. Then he rose, lit another cigarette, put on his coat, took his hat and stick and switched off the light.

Half way down the corridor he stopped. A curious desire had struck him to look into Mannerson's room. It seemed silly and he walked on. But the wish persisted. Smiling at the childishness of his action he turned and walked back till he stopped in front of Mannerson's door. It was locked—naturally. . .

He called a boy.

"Get Jim to open Mr. Mannerson's door for me," he said.

At last he got in. The great, square room was exactly as it had always been, just as Mannerson had left it. Gresham walked by the secretary's desk to Mannerson's. With a half-guilty look at the closed door he sat down in Mannerson's comfortable chair.

He switched on the desk light. Everything was arranged neatly, press-despatches of a few days before, unanswered correspondence, brown manila envelopes marked "News—Rush." Idly Gresham pulled at a drawer. It opened. Gresham looked inside. A little book, in a black leather cover, caught his eye. He picked it up.

It was a book of poems . . . ! So Mannerson still nibbled occasionally—in secret. . .

Gresham opened to a page at random. He read the first two lines that caught his eye. They were:

Come no profane insatiate mortal near
With the contagion of his passionate ills. . .

Gresham read no more. He closed the book quickly and put it back. He sat still a minute looking beyond the penumbra of light into the darkness. Then he turned off the switch, rose and went out. . .

VIII

A FEW minutes later he rang the bell of Mannerson's house. He was admitted. The girl asked him to go upstairs as Mrs. Mannerson was too ill to come down. Gresham went up. . . . Outside her door he paused, hesitant. But he went in. Elsie was lying on a sofa, propped up against some pillows. Their eyes met. He closed the door.

PROSE LIBRE

By Manchester Willdy

HAROLD slammed the door of his humble cottage with a defiant bang and stood hesitating for an instant; then, thrusting his hands into the pockets of his mail-carrier's jacket, he swung off down the walk.

As he hurried along the wind ruffled his hair into little golden ringlets about his forehead and ears and he whistled a measure from "Nearer, My God, to Thee." At the corner he stopped, glancing up and down the street; then, with a ripple of muscles straining the seams of his neat gray jacket, he lifted the cover of a man-hole and dropped quickly into its cavity.

In the velvety darkness beneath the city's thoroughfare he lighted nimbly upon his feet, and with accustomed familiarity ran along until a thread of light glimmered from beneath a door just ahead.

With one hand pressing his throat he stumbled to a standstill, a smile of such wonderful sweetness lighting his features as to distinguish them easily in the darkness with a sort of phosphorescent glow.

"It certainly is the limit how my heart palpitates," he sighed, tapping lightly upon the door, thrice and then twice.

With a great grinding of bolts and chains the stone door rolled inward, and overcome, the man swayed against the doorsill, drinking in the picture before him.

The room into which he looked was one often seen before, but as always he stood spellbound. It was circular and the walls were plastered in squares of different colors; a soft turf covered the floor. Hanging from the ceiling was a gold and crystal lamp, its rays softly illuminating a massive, carved table heaped with bonbons, a bag of golf sticks, a bottle of iodine and other trifles dear to the feminine heart. Rare bits of porcelains lay upon the floor and from a chain of porphyry swung a jeweled cage in which sat a crooning paraqueet.

Beneath the cage was a low couch, covered with purple satin, and piled high with brocaded cushions; at the foot stood a tabouret upon which rested a square of white with the lettering, "Keep off the grass."

Upon the couch reclined a woman, and with a dazzle of henna-tinted teeth she smiled up at the entranced youth. "Harold, my darling!"

Overcome, the man covered his eyes and such a trembling convulsed him that his hat fell from his head and rolled under the table and lay silently.

Softly the woman laughed, coquettishly waving a gorgeous fan of peacock feathers, the strand of perfect agates upon her forehead winking and scintillating wickedly. Defining the slenderness of hips and limbs a neo-Turkish gauze clung, while in striking contrast a flaming red flannel undershirt covered the top part of her body.

Crossing to her side, Harold dropped to his knees, again and again pressing his lips to her little jeweled hands, being cautious, however, not to ruffle his moustache.

"Sciatica, my darling," he murmured.

Gently she stroked his hair. Then as she arose, absently shaking from her skirt the hairs that had fallen, he cov-

ered his face and wept, "It's just too darned mean," he sobbed. "But I can't come here any more. My wife knows all; one of those horrid street sweepers sa wme leaving here the other night and tattled. So tonight must be farewell; farewell forever, my queen. I must return to my Minnie and the babies. We shall never meet again."

With a little moan the woman clutched at the red flannel which covered her heart, rapidly swaying from side to side and backward and forward until she was dizzy. Then suddenly she straightened, eyes squinted and chest outthrust. "Ah," she said, following Harold from the room, and then again, "Oh!"

As the cool air fanned through the man-hole into her face she took a stick of calamus from the folds of her gown and began to chew it rapidly. Then, with a loud gust, exhaling her breath, she convulsively yoked him. "Very well, then; it is good-bye."

She smiled bravely, but a tear, or something, trickled down her nose and hung there suspended like a glistening jewel. Then, as was customary, she passionately kissed him before stooping, hands upon knees as in leap-frog, so that he might spring to the mouth of the opening. She bit into her lips until the blood flowed up and down her chin.

As Harold balanced upon his knees on the edge of the hole, his head hanging into the opening for a last look at his dear one, the woman suddenly went mad at the thought of giving up this curly-headed mail-man to another woman; she would rather see him dead than to have him go away and raise more little mail-men. And as if to answer her prayer, the shriek of a fire-engine was heard; nearer and nearer it came, and while she looked on in terror, fascinated, it passed over Harold's body, wrapping him effectively about the axle, and so lubricating the wheels that the wagon arrived at the fire almost in time to put it out.

And Sciatica threw herself upon the cold floor and wept bitterly, for he had been such a sweet boy and she had truly loved him.



GRIEF

By John Hamilton

"WHY do you weep?" I asked her.
"Because of my husband," she sobbed.
"He is dead?" I inquired sympathetically.
She shook her head.
"He beats you?" I asked.
Again she shook her head.
"He is false?" I tried again.
Once more she shook her head.
"Then why do you weep?" I asked.
"Because I have none," she sobbed.



LE CHIEN DE JANET

By Jean Nesmy

BIEN longtemps je l'ai vu qui gardait le seuil de Janet, ce chien-là. Sa houpp elande de poils longs et frisés portait des tons usés et des plaques de lèpre comme un vieux toit de chaume. Ses yeux, ourlés de rouge, étaient chaque matin collés par la chassie; leur eau, qui avait dû, au temps de leur jeunesse, étinceler d'une belle lumière verte toute pailletée d'or, n'était plus qu'ombre et que fumée. Et son nom lui-même: Pillou! avait je ne sais quoi d'humble et de lamentable.

Il n'y avait pourtant pas de meilleurs amis sur terre que Janet et son chien. Et la pauvre défunte Catissette, que Pillou avait remplacée dans la maison et l'affection du maître, par la faute du barbichon avait étc vite oubliée. Elle avait bien, la vieille, l'esprit un peu aigre, s'il faut tout dire. Et la bête, issue d'une chienne de race mâtinée par quelque croquant de chien berger, hargneuse avec les autres et douce avec les gens, avait été, en fin de compte, d'une espèce vaillante. Seulement, son temps, comme il arrive à toutes choses, était passé.

Janet l'avait toujours sur ses talons. Et qui avait vu l'un, pour la misère de l'allure, pour la tristesse du regard et pour l'air traine-patte, avait aussi vu l'autre. Ils avaient mené ensemble, si longtemps, leur même vieux trantran, tantôt paissant la vache, tantôt grattant l'écuelle ou faisant au soleil, dans le bourdonnement des mouches, leur sieste près du maigre gerbier, tantôt courant dans la rosée le lièvre des garrigues! Pillou, non taxé chez le percepteur, battait la campagne, happait les taupes, volait les œufs, enlevait en passant quelques plumes aux volailles et ne coûtait à son maître, au demeurant, que quelques tranches de pain noir trempées dans un doigt d'eau. Ainsi vivaient heureux dans leur misère partagée, le Janet et son chien, lorsqu'un voisin jaloux—et pour bien peu!—vint tout gâter.

Ce Tourtiol—dont le riche domaine touchait à la masure et aux quatre arpents de terre mal fumés de ce gueux de Janet—accusait les chardons de ce pauvre héritage d'envoyer sur le sien les duvets flottants de leurs graines quand soufflait le vent de la pluie. Il y avait également entre eux, comme il est de règle entre paysans voisins, des histoires de poules, d'eau et de pré. Si bien qu'une année, lorsque la Commission des répartiteurs fut réunie à la maison commune pour sa séance de revision des taxes devant le contrôleur, le chien de Janet, qui avait toujours, jusque-là, vécu dans son obscurité, eut l'honneur d'être signalé.

Les autres, Barbarat, Tousselongue, Méchain, Guinot, et jusqu'au maire, Fuligny, qui n'était pourtant pas "du parti," eurent beau mettre un doigt sur la bouche et vouloir imposer silence à leur collègue pour faire valoir que ce Janet—inscrit sur la liste des indigents—était vraiment bien pauvre pour payer une taxe de chien, Tourtiol tint bon dans sa rancune: Janet avait-il un barbet, oui ou non? S'il pouvait le nourrir, il pouvait bien, comme tout chacun, payer les vingt sous de l'imposition. Et puis, il était républicain comme les autres, pas? Il le criait assez fort, Dieu merci! à chaque élection. La même loi pour tous! La République elle-même, par son premier principe, exigeait donc que le chien de Janet fût taxé.

Et Tourtiol eut raison: Pillou fut couché sur les rôles du "collecteur."

Lorsque Janet, quelques mois après, reçut du piéton ses feuilles de taille et se les fit expliquer le dimanche suivant par le régent, il fut si surpris et furieux, coquin de sort! qu'il laissa tomber sa pipe en écume qui, tout naturellement, se cassa: un malheur ne vient jamais seul. Et quand il apprit par Tousselongue, heureux de se disculper, que cette taxe lui était value par Tourtiol, sa colère, comme on pense, se trouva encore de ce coup plus enflée.

Vous direz que ce n'était jamais que vingt sous par an: c'est certain! Mais vingt sous! viédase! ce n'est tout de même pas rien pour qui, à chaque foire, c'est-à-dire deux petites fois par mois, gagnait bien péniblement un écu avec ses lapins, ses poules ou ses pigeons. Et puis, ces vingt sous, Janet ne les eût pas déboursés sans Tourtiol, ou, du moins, il les aurait mieux employés. Il est sûr que deux belles bordelaises de blanc, de ce chef, pfuitt! pfuitt! . . . lui passaient sous le nez. De quelque façon qu'on le prit, vous voyez bien vous-même qu'il y avait de quoi être vexé!

— Mais, c'est bon! finit par se dire notre homme pour se consoler. L'an prochain, Tourtiol ne sera peut-être plus des répartiteurs. Et, dans tous les cas, on saura comme je m'appelle!

Et d'une année à l'autre, il mâcha sa colère. Au jour dit, il n'oublia pas. Et quand, de nouveau, Tourtiol, à la séance, parla du chien de Janet, Janet fut là pour le défendre. La discussion s'engagea vivement de part et d'autre, et, tout de suite, devint aigre. A toi! à moi! Tu es ceci, tu es cela! Coup de bec sur coup de bec, comme font deux petits coqs malins pour une poule. Si bien que le contrôleur, impatienté, et qui entendait depuis un moment déjà sur la place les grelots du cheval qui l'attendait, dut promptement intervenir.

— Monsieur Tourtiol, laizzez-moi, je vous prie, régler l'affaire. Expliquez-vous bien, Janet. Que contestez-vous? Vous avez un chien?

— Parfaitement, Monsieur le Contrôleur. Et ç'a même été une brave bête.

— Eh bien! alors?

— Oui, mais il n'y a qu'un malheur: à présent il est vieux et mange pain perdu.

— Voyons, mon brave homme, qu'est-ce que vous voulez que ca me fasse?

— Une gourle-de chien, Monsieur le Contrôleur, qui ne vous ferait pas seulement virer une poule dans la maison, ni une vache dans un pré, ni seulement un taon sur son museau. Asthmatique comme un vieux soufflet, et moins méchant pour le monde, sauf votre respect, qu'un cochon qui tette! Alors, qu'est-ce que ça fait? Ça jappe à la lune, et encore pas longtemps! Et ça ronfle au soleil. En dehors de cela, bon à rien! Et c'est ça que cette canaille voudrait faire imposer!

Tourtiol qui, jusque-là, n'avait pas plus bronché qu'une mule, haussa à peine la plus haute de ses épaules; puis, intervenant d'un ton calme et d'un air sans malice, il confirma de tous points, en renchérissant même, ce que l'autre avait dit:

— Pour ca, je garantis que cet homme a dit vrai. Son chien ne sert à rien. Ses jambes, son nez et ses yeux lui défendent autant de garder la vache que de pister le lièvre. Et je gagerais même qu'un perdreau pourrait tourner tout un jour sous son nez, au fil de la lèchefrite, sans qu'il tendit la langue pour y croquer!

— Je vous le disais bien, Monsieur le contrôleur, fit Janet triomphant.

— La conclusion, reprit Tourtiol, c'est que ledit chien qui n'est, de l'avis de son maître comme dumien, ni chien de chasse, ni chien de berger, ni chien de garde, doit tout bonnement entrer dans la catégorie des chiens de luxe et, conséquemment, être imposé comme tel.

— 5 francs alors, au lieu de 1 franc? glissa le contrôleur.

— Evidemment! assura Tourtiol.

Et Janet eut beau faire; Pillou, cette année-là, fut imposé 5 francs.

THE STAR SPANGLED STAGE

By George Jean Nathan

SOME fifteen years ago and still in the critical egg, it was one of the major diversions of my almost ceaseless indignation regularly to deride and pummel the so-called star system of the local stage. Against this system and its personages I was wont to discharge profoundly manufactured dialectic and abuse, supported by what then seemed to me to be exceedingly sanguinary epigrams, deadly *mots* and bomb-like similes and metaphors. Let a physiologically choice young woman, newly graduated to stage-eminence from some managerial love sofa, show herself in anything more than the merest eight-point advertisement, and promptly I had at her with some such very ironical definition as "Star: A heavenly body," or some such whack-slat as "A star actress is one who is occasionally loved by the public, and more frequently by the manager." And let a Figaro somewhat less capable than Forbes-Robertson or Moissi, but possessed of two-inch eyelashes, be elevated overnight by some astute impresario from the part of the butler to anything more important than *friend to Bassanio,* and I was upon the poor fellow with something like "A proficient actor is one who is successful in completely immersing his own personality in the role he is playing; a star actor, one who is successful in completely immersing the role he is playing in his own personality." And having thus performed upon these poachers and depredators, I would chuckle myself to sleep and arise early the next morning to detect the death rattles and watch the star system roll over, gasp, and die. But each morning, much to my chagrin and utter incomprehension, the impersuasible stars and their system—for all my seemingly unsurmountable objections—appeared to get stronger and rosier. For the more assiduously and sarcastically I would lay to the night before with cutlass, machine gun, cup custard, broom handle, dynamite, axe, old slipper, field pieces and pea-blower, the more would I hop out at suncrack to view the enormous stacks of corpses and be dumfounded to hear only a peaceful, rhythmic, and apparently very comfortable snoring.

But I was young then, and not disheartened. For two—three—years, I kept at the job, hurling soft puddings and bricks, fashioning biting pronunciamentos, installing secret wireless stations on the roof, brewing devastating repartees, and shooting off thousands of lethal things like "Why these extravagant hymns to Madame Sarah Bernhardt because she possesses the courage to appear on the stage with a wooden leg? A leg is approximately but a one-sixth part of the human body. There are therefore any number of star actresses amongst us who, in the matter of woodenness, have the Madame beaten six to one." And not only did the stars themselves daily come in for my mortal comments—as for example, "An actor is one who cannot act; a star actor, one whose exceptional virtuosity in this direction has brought him recognition from a manager"—but also the audiences who, against my expressed wish, seemed to rush to see the stars in such numbers that I was compelled to take a side-street to get to my home. Of the women who went to make up these audiences I would caus-

tically observe that they fell into two classes: those who thought that James K. Hackett was too grand for words, and those who thought that James K. Hackett would be too grand for words if he got his hair cut. And of the masculine element, that the three greatest star comedians in America were (1) Dan Daly; (2) Thomas Q. Seabrooke; and (3) the man who could laugh at Frank Daniels. And of the programs handed to these audiences (nothing was out of the range of my pig-balloon), that they were devices subtly employed by theatrical managers to persuade the audience to believe that the play it was about to see was going to be acted—or, again, that they were pamphlets circulated by the producer to assure the audience that the theater was disinfected of germs with C N Disinfectant and the play disinfected of drama with actors.

To reinforce this epigrammatic front line, I would then hustle up from the rear a heavy artillery of smoking similitudes and analogies, among them such *cartouches* as the likening of this star actress' carriage to a buckboard and that star actor's vehement articulation of grief to a long train of freight cars in the act of unbuckling. But the more I performed, the longer grew the lines at the box-offices of the houses wherein the stars were playing and the more the newspapers gave over their pages to the public's insistent demand for interviews in which the star actresses explained how difficult it was for inexperienced and innocent women like themselves to act sophisticated roles of the Camille and Zaza type and how (*business of shuddering*) it was therefore necessary for them to take up with one of these creatures in order closely to watch and study her. And so great presently became the popularity of the heterogeneous stars and the public's relish for them that it was a rare Sunday newspaper that gave one-tenth the space to the Philippine muddle and the Nan Patterson case that it devoted to this star's confession that she was originally a well-known society girl of Roanoke, Va., or to that star's opinion that women should not smoke in public. Photographs of star actresses' Chinese hounds and star actors' "country homes" at Bay Shore, Long Island, edged the pictures of James R. Keene's Sysonby, Adlai E. Stevenson's birthplace and the hotel clerk who had discovered that Maxim Gorky and the lady were not married, off the first page and interviews in which star actresses told how much moral good was being done by the play in which they were acting crowded Delmas' remarks back opposite the Siegel-Cooper advertisement. Thus, of an already lusty seed, did the star system of the popular theater—for all the hogsheads of vinegar I poured upon it—blossom to its present sweeping proportions. And why? Very simply, because in spite of such amiable hanswursts as the Nathans of a decade and a half ago and the Hamiltons of the present day, this star system is not the pox claimed for it, but actually a very valuable, a very sound, and very prophylactic institution.

The steadily increasing success of the star system is a tribute to the superior critical sagacity which the mob, as opposed to the so-called cultivated minority, on very rare occasions evinces. It was the American mob that got the proper measure of Maeterlinck while the minority was still extolling him as a second Shakespeare. It was this same mob that, on another level, detected the photographic virtues in Charles Hoyt and George Ade and George Cohan while the minority saw in the first only a cheap farce writer, in the second only a slangy buffoon and in the third only a very cocky young man who was given to singing about the American flag through his nose. And it was this mob again, and not the minority, that first soundly appraised at their correct values such diverse native artists as Mark Twain and Montague Glass. The theater mob of Washington, in the very teeth of its critical minority, first detected the virtues in Barrie's "Peter Pan." The theater mob of Philadelphia, in the teeth of its critical minority, first detected the virtues in Eleanor

Gates' "Poor Little Rich Girl." The theater mob of New York, in the teeth of its critical minority, measured accurately the virtues of Sheldon's admirable dramatization of Sudermann's "Song of Songs." It sometimes happens! And one of these sometimes is vouchsafed us in the mob's acute realization that, far from being a damaging vice, the star system has been one of the most trenchant forces working toward the prosperity of a better American, or American-presented, drama and a more elevated American cabotinage.

Let us consider the situation. Not theoretically, but in terms of available fact. In the first place, then, is the star system, even as we at present rather absurdly have it, inimical to the sound presentation of good drama? I reply to the question by asking another. Are such plays as Galsworthy's "Justice" and "Silver Box," for instance, in any way deleted of artistic force by the starring in them even of such variable actors as the Barrymores, *frère et sœur?* Are these dramas not actually invested with a greater artistic force by this managerial emphasis of the leading roles? Is the same author's "Strife," presented (as it has been) without the stress of stars, relatively more forceful or more soundly composed and presented? And are not stars in such instances of an actual tonic advantage, since they frequently attract to worthwhile drama many susceptible persons who might otherwise remain away?

Again, consider the effect of the star system upon acting. Germany, Austria and, in considerable measure, France know no such greatly—and apparently ridiculously—elaborated starring system as the American. As a consequence, for all one reads to the contrary in the learned books on the drama written by the two-building college professors of Mechanical Engineering and Botany, the general average of the acting in the American theater is at present of a quality quite as good as, if not superior to, that on any of the stages named. In the entire theater of Germany and Austria in the year of the late war's outbreak there were a number of actors like Schroth, Albert Heine, Moissi, Grube, Lindemann and Kayssler of a vivid and exceptional talent; but the absence of an encouraging and inspiriting star system had left the rank and file in a sorry state of under-development. Moissi is a very much better tragedian and character actor than our star system has developed and Schroth a better performer of the average straight role, but for every other Germano-Austrian actor of any authentic grade it is not difficult to name at least two—and in some cases perhaps as many as three—American or naturalized American or Anglo-American actors. Similarly, while the French actor like Guitry *fils,* say, is of course a vastly more proficient farceur than the American, he is on the whole inferior to the latter in the other instances of dramatic interpretation. For one Max Dearly the American stage can boast three or four equally good, if not better, low comedians. For one Guitry *père,* the American stage gives you a twofold correlative talent. Try, for example, relatively to match French actor for American star in the instances of Arnold Daly, John Drew, William Faversham, Walter Hampden, David Warfield, Lew Fields, Leo Ditrichstein, Fritz Leiber . . .

Coming to the women, the case is even more illuminating. And it is not necessary to support one's contention with the names of the American women whose right to stardom has been—or is—uncontested. Take the cases of those whose status has not been, is not, so fully agreed upon. And on this plane search Germany or Austria or France for an actress capable of giving a better, sounder and more artistically telling performance than such as-if-too-suddenly manufactured and professorially scoffed at stars as the Fenwick of "The Song of Songs," the Ulrich of "Tiger Rose," the Starr of "The Easiest Way," the Jolivet of "Where Ignorance Is Bliss," the Stevens of "The Unchastened Woman," the Reed of "Roads of Destiny," the Keane of "Romance," the

Ferguson of "The Strange Woman," the Taylor of "Mrs. Dakon's Daughter." . . . Was Ethel Barrymore's talent corrupted—was it not rather encouraged to fructification—by Frohman's starring of her when she was still an artistically immature and merely very pretty girl? Would the comedic talent of Margaret Lawrence, say, be in any way encompassed and made sterile if the Selwyns were to make a star of her tomorrow?

The objection to the star system is conventionally based upon two assumptions—both of which are false. The first of these assumptions is that it tends to destroy smooth ensemble performances. What it actually does in the majority of instances is precisely the opposite. In example whereof, take at random any ten or twelve of the more recent companies with and without stars, and compare the ensemble performances of those containing stars with the performances of those minus stars. On the star side take, for instance, "Tiger! Tiger!", "The Saving Grace," "A Successful Calamity," "Why Marry," "The Very Minute," "Redemption," "The Copperhead," "Mr. Lazarus," "Kismet," "Madame Sand," "Getting Married" and "A Marriage of Convenience." And on the non-star side, for example, "Three Wise Fools," "Daddies," "The Gypsy Trail," "Hush," "A Little Journey," "Polly With a Past," "Magic," "The Betrothal," "The Devil's Garden," "The Happy Ending," "Toby's Bow" and "The Invisible Foe." Compare the one side with the other and cast your vote, a vote that will assuredly go to the star productions and one that will be all the more confirmatory since a fair number of productions in both lists were made by the same directors and since, further, a number of the productions listed on the star side were purposely selected for the comparatively mediocre quality of the stars who appeared in them. Thus, unless I am greatly mistaken in your ballot, one discovers that the weakness in ensemble acting, where it exists, has often less to do with the star system than with the director responsible for the production.

The second characteristic assumption is that the system, as we have it, is an evil since it is in the occasional habit of elevating to stardom young women whose histrionic virtuosity is alleged to be confined principally either to a pretty face or to an openness to managerial amour that amounts almost to Southern hospitality—or to both. This assumption seems to me to wear two false-faces. In the first place, to argue that the star system is intrinsically an evil because certain of the young lady stars it has manufactured are neither actresses nor virgins is, as I see it, of a piece with arguing that the non-star system is intrinsically an evil because certain of its male performers are neither actors nor satyrs. And in the second place, to believe that it is improbable that a young woman may be possessed simultaneously of a talent for concubinage and for acting is to bring into the argument a morality as alien to an appraisal of histrionic skill as it is to an appraisal of literature. The simple truth, of course, is that in America, as well as in England and, more especially, on the Continent, a number of the most proficient actresses of the present years—to say nothing of the past—have been graduated to their estate of granted proficiency out of managerial embraces.

To object to the American star system as a menace to acting and drama on the ground that it occasionally (as within the last few months) pops into stardom a talentless young woman who achieves star eminence for herself by the simple means of putting up half the money for the show or a talentless actor who illuminates Broadway with his name in Matkowsky capitals by laying out twelve thousand dollars is to object to American book publishing as a menace to art and literature on the ground that it occasionally (as within the last few months) pops into absurd prominence by means of extravagant newspaper and book-jacket advertising a talentless young man who pays for

his own book and writes personally the high praise of himself or an equally talentless young woman who does likewise. The star system, at bottom, is a sound and serviceable, a logical and natural, institution. And its frequent abuse may—as I see it—no more be brought as an argument against its fundamental worth, validity and integrity than the frequent abuse of the eyes may be brought as an argument against the practice of reading. The star system has proved itself of undeniably sound commercial design—and whatever brings the theater to prosper must in the end, though the end be far off, be viewed with critical satisfaction. And if on the more relevant side of artistic design the star system has been not always quite so uniformly successful, its measure of comparative artistic success has at least outweighed its measure of comparative artistic failure. Regarded from any plane of criticism higher than that from which one appraises the art of the Sells Brothers, the art of even the best actor is of course approximately as authentic an art as that practiced by Duveen, Knoedler or any other such merchant in the retailing of masterpieces. But estimating it merely for what it is, what it stands for, and what it seeks to accomplish, the star system, for all its absurdity, is as valuable to the theater as a pocketful of iron crosses and *croix de guerres* is to the general of an army: it is a spur to effort, a teaser to glory, a something to transfix the gaze of the great crowd on the line of parade.

Mr. Thomas A. Wise is, in sound criticism, a not particularly able actor, yet as a star his Falstaff is an immeasurably better Falstaff than that of Wilhelm Diegelmann, who, because he is not starred in Germany, gives the native professors an excuse to declaim omnisciently against the American star system. Madame Nazimova is similarly a not particularly illustrious actress, yet as a star her Ibsen performances are immeasurably better than those of Ida Wüst, of Brahm's famous Lessing Theater company, who—not being starred in Germany—provides the local Brunetières with still another excuse. Come down the list a bit, and you will find analogously that such a local and artistically debatable star as Ruth Chatterton is, though debatable, yet possessed of an actually greater skill than such a French non-star as the Mlle. Sylvie who plays in Paris the same kind of parts the Chatterton plays in New York. And the same thing holds true in the cases of Billie Burke and Marthe Regnier. If Desjardins isn't starred in France and Henry Dixey is starred in America, it is, quite properly, because Dixey is really the better and more deserving actor. And if Brulé isn't starred in France and William Gillette is starred in America in the same kind of roles, it is similarly because Gillette, being the more effective performer, deserves to be starred.

II

Not less interesting than Dunsany's "The Laughter of the Gods," newly exhibited in the repertoire of Mr. Stuart Walker, were certain of the critical performances locally visited upon the work and its author. The stellar droll one in this enterprise was, as the astute reader will suspect, the august M. Towse of the *Evening Post*. Thus, after a resounding Sousa prelude, the august M. Towse:

> "A close, critical scrutiny of the play reveals some obvious weaknesses. In the first place, it is certain that when an argument or a meaning is intended the exposition of it should be clear. In this particular case, for instance, in which supernaturalism (whether Pagan or otherwise is immaterial) supplies the energy of the whole dramatic scheme, the spectators ought to be left in no doubt as to whether or not it is held up to ridicule. Yet this is the condition in which a good many of them must have found themselves the other evening, if it occurred to them to think at all. It is not probable that Lord Dunsany deliberately set to work to puzzle his audience with conundrums, but he has proposed several. At whom or at what were the gods laughing? At the jocose slaughter of a court which had refused to credit a prophecy which they had themselves suborned or at the priest

whose lie they converted into a true and seemingly inspired prediction? Or did the priest willingly deceive his blackmailers by pretending that he was lying when he knew that he was speaking the truth? Or was he trying at the last to undo the mischief for which he was mainly responsible?"

Let us, by way of assessing the kidney of dramatic criticism to which a playwright is subjected at the hands of New York journalism, undertake the more or less bootless business of criticizing this criticism.

In the first place, then, the august M. Towse's observation that "It is certain that when an argument or a meaning is intended the exposition of it should be clear. In this particular case, for instance, in which supernaturalism . . . supplies the energy of the whole dramatic scheme, the spectators ought to be left in no doubt as to whether or not it is held up to ridicule," etc.

In the first place as to the M. Towse's in-the-first-place, why should it be desirable that the spectators be left in no doubt as to whether the supernaturalism in point is or is not held up to ridicule? Even granting that some sort of argument or meaning is intended which —as Dunsany explicitly stated in an article quoted in M. Towse's *Evening Post*, among other papers—is not the case. This leaving of the spectators in doubt is the very element that makes the play the notably impressive thing it is. Chesterton has worked the same trick in "Magic." Brieux has done largely the same thing in "La Foi." Ibsen, if we are to listen to the opinions of Catulle Mendès, Ahlberg, Jaeger and Georg Brandes, did much the same in his "Comedy of Love." The spectators at Ibsen's "Wild Duck" are left in doubt as to where the thematic ridicule of satire ceases and the bite of tragedy begins, and vice versa. And so on without end.

"It is not probable that Dunsany deliberately set to work to puzzle his audience with conundrums, but he has proposed several," continues the M. Towse, and proceeds to enumerate.

Dunsany—despite the M. Towse—deliberately set to work to do just that. If intrinsic proof be needed, we have his published word for it. But to this outside word it is not necessary to look. "The Laughter of the Gods," plainly enough, is deliberately a conundrum play—as "The Lady or the Tiger" was deliberately a conundrum story and as "Mr. Lazarus" and "The Thirteenth Chair" were deliberately conundrum plays. Or, on a higher level, as Schnitzler's "Bernhardi" and Bahr's "Principle" and Galsworthy's "Strife" are, in one sense, deliberately conundrum plays and as, in another, are Shaw's "Getting Married" and—by stretching a point —Dunsany's own "Glittering Gate." The thematic conundrum of "The Laughter of the Gods" puzzles Dunsany's audience for the very simple reason that it also puzzles Dunsany. And being an artist, Dunsany has none of the hack's wish arbitrarily to answer what is intrinsically an unanswerable riddle merely that his play may be the more toothsome to the yokel appetite for "endings." This childish desire to have everything explained, proved, settled, sealed and labelled is the invariable itch of the What's-Inside-the-Doll school of journalistic criticism to which the M. Towse is a typical professor. Of the inscrutable mysteries and riddles of the universe, the meaninglessness in the circlings of the globe and of what transpires on it and above it and below it, this criticism and its devotees demand a facile and satisfactory solution. That the great artists of the world, from Shakespeare and Beethoven to Hauptmann and Anatole France and from Ibsen and Balzac to Synge and Gorky and Conrad, have been baffled in the face of the riddles means less to the Towses than that the Charles Kleins and Charles Rann Kennedys have always been quick to find soothing answers.

The utter fatuity of such criticism is to be perceived in the questions which the M. Towse would have Dunsany and his work answer and which, being not answered, greatly, in the Towse estimation, weaken the play.

"At whom or at what were the gods laughing?" the curious Towse demands to know. Or again—

"Did the priest willingly deceive his blackmailers by pretending that he was lying when he knew that he was speaking the truth?" Or again—

"Was he trying at the last to undo the mischief for which he was mainly responsible?"

Following an analogous train of critical reasoning, the good Towse might readily find fault with "The Master Builder" (as, sure enough, did Professor Frank Wadleigh Chandler, of nothing less than the University of Cincinnati) because Ibsen has failed clearly to answer for the Prof. such questions (I quote the genial Prof., who calls them "enigmas") as:

1. "Is Hilda a woman, like Hedda, or is she a mere imaginative child?"
2. "Is Hilda the youthful aspiraton of Solness returned to him in later life? If so, his death is a triumph, not a tragedy!"
3. "Or, again, is Hilda, as his embodied aspiration, a futile force? If so, the play is a tragedy!"

And, similarly and quite as relevantly, the good Towse might find fault with Beethoven's Fifth on the ground that it does not satisfactorily answer for him such conundrums as why does a chicken cross the road; has Irene Castle married again; and how soon will William Jennings Bryan die.

"The Laughter of the Gods," though considerably inferior to "The Gods of the Mountain," is a finely imaginative and compelling derisory satire. Its theatrical effectiveness, for all the non-star mob of lugubrious mimes which the local producer has bequeathed it, is astonishing. It is, and by long odds, the most distinguished new play—indeed, the only distinguished new play—of the season to date. And it makes one wonder, once again, why no one has thus far looked to Dunsany for grand opera material. What librettos his plays would make!

III

In Laurence Eyre's "Mis' Nelly of N'Orleans," Mrs. Fiske again proves that in the interpretation of what may be called burlesque comedy she is gifted with all the exceptional virtuosity which her admirers falsely claim for her in drama. Her maneuvering of the rôle of an ex-belle of the 1880's who sets her largely vanished charms to the grotesque capture of an ancient Creole beau constitutes a brilliant performance and makes of what is intrinsically a stiffly manufactured, if often pleasantly wayward, comedy a diverting and quite charming sentimental travesty. The play is excellently mounted by Mr. Harrison Grey Fiske and, save in the instance of the rôle of the conventional bouncy-curl, poke-belly, in-toeing ingènue, very well cast.

"Just Around the Corner," by George V. Hobart and Herbert H. Winslow, is a trashy imitation of "The Fortune Hunter" containing an equally trashy imitation of the doctrine of "Broadway and Buttermilk" and of the big curtain of "The Gentleman from Mississippi," the whole enriched with venerable jokes about whiskers, poison ivy and Uneeda biscuits. "The Net," by Maravene Thompson, is a loud melodramatic snort about a gentleman suffering from amnesia. "Toby's Bow," by John Taintor Foote, is a feeble and amateurish comedy about a novelist who goes to the dogs but who comes back in due and hackneyed course safely rid of the last flea. And "Please Get Married," by two gentlemen whose names I cannot remember, is a farce that in its effort to be Frenchy perspires like a German trombone player.

IV

Add anywhere on Pg. 133: When the dramatist places his emphasis upon a certain rôle—as he does four times in five—why should it be held an artistic error for the dramatist's producer to do likewise?

NOTES OF A POETRY-HATER

By H. L. Mencken

I

THE literary remains of Joyce Kilmer, poor fellow, are given an Odd Fellows' funeral, with a wagon-load of tin wreaths and music by the shingle factory silver cornet band, in the two grandiose volumes of his "poems, essays and letters," edited by Robert Cortes Holliday (*Doran*). I quote the very first paragraph of the editorial memoir:

> It is the felicity of these pages that they cannot be dull. It is their merit, peculiar in such a memoir, that they cannot be sad. It is their novelty that they can be restricted in appeal only by the varieties of the human species. It is their good fortune that they can be extraordinarily frank. It is their virtue that they cannot fail to do unmeasurable good. And it is their luck to abide many days.

Nay, I am attempting no oafish buffoonery at the expense of a dead poetaster and his friends. The quotation is *verbatim et literatim;* I do not forge or omit a single word. The intent, I have no doubt, was laudable enough. It was to dredge up as much merit and consequence out of a fallen soldier's life-work as could be found there—and perhaps to augment that merit and consequence by showing glimpses of the face that he turned to his intimates, and by a somewhat sedulous insistence upon the circumstance of his passing. But the inevitable effect of page after page of such highfalutin pishposh is to let down the whole enterprise to the level of the nonsensical, and to rob Kilmer himself of whatever small dignity he had in life. The maudlin canonization of Rupert Brooke, carried off a year or two ago by fluttering old maids, is here vastly surpassed, as every American imitation of English sentimentality surpasses the original. It would be difficult, indeed, even amid all the pious attitudinizing that passes for criticism among us, to find a more ridiculous example of uncritical extravagance, or a more disastrous disservice to one who, in life, at least labored industriously and brought to his modest jobs an honorable enthusiasm. It is an assault with cream puffs, holy water and red-white-and-blue confetti, but it is none the less as devastating as an assault with clubs.

What the two tall volumes actually reveal, forgetting the editor and turning to the author himself, is a minor poet who did one or two things very well indeed, and a journalist who did many and diverse things rather badly, and an itinerant lecturer who seems to have done scarcely anything at all. There is one unmistakably excellent poem: "Trees." There is another of fine boldness and originality: "A Blue Valentine." But what else is there? Searching with the utmost hospitality, I can find absolutely nothing. "Rouge Bouquet," which the author seems to have held in particular esteem, is the most commonplace war-poem imaginable—a veritable thesaurus of obvious ideas and fly-blown phrases. "Main Street," another of his favorites, is simply sentimental prose sawed into lengths. "The White Ships and the Red" is a newspaper versifier's bad imitation of Swinburne. And the rest? The rest range from such boyish inanities as "Slender Your Hands" to such journalistic doggerels as "When the Sixty-ninth Comes Home." Now and

then, true enough, the mood lifts a bit. A flavor of something finer hangs about such things, for example, as "Citizen of the World" and "The Robe of Christ." But this something is religious enthusiasm rather than poetical beauty. Kilmer, it appears, was an ecstatic Catholic—a convert almost fanatical. His fervor got itself into some of his lines, giving them a certain naïve earnestness. But it did not make them poetry.

I have a suspicion, indeed, that much of his undoubted repute among the uncritical as a bard of talent was pumped up by gentlemen, chiefly ecclesiastical, who estimated him by his somewhat inordinate piety. He was, in his way, a useful man to the church, and hence there was a temptation to make much of him. This consideration must certainly have begotten the doctrine that he was an intelligent critic of letters, for it is quite impossible to find any other ground for it. His essays on the poetry of Hillaire Belloc and the Catholic poets of Belgium are quite pathetically childish. Take away the thesis that the value of poetry is to be measured by the author's fidelity to the Latin rite, and nothing remains of them save a few banal platitudes. That sort of thing, I daresay, has its uses at the literary exercises held in convent schools, but it is absurd to print it in a book. It is not even novel, for if one changes "the Latin rite" to "Methodism" or "the Y. M. C. A.," one has stated the exact thesis of nine-tenths of all American criticism. As for the rest of the Kilmerian prose, it is almost too stupid to be described. In "Holy Ireland," as in the verse, religious enthusiasm gives the obvious some dignity, but the rest shows absolutely nothing that any ordinary newspaper reporter might not have done. The letters from the front reveal a good soldier's revolt against the blather of the current war books, but beyond that they are quite empty.

Well, then, what remains of Kilmer? Precious little, despite these flamboyant and preposterous volumes. A couple of very fair poems, a book of solemn interviews with bad authors, a memory of hard work earnestly done, and a last burst of high adventure, evil-starred but excessively romantic.

II

Books of war verse are naturally numerous, but it is hard to find anything of merit in them. Most of them are the productions of poets who apparently served during the war, not in the line of the army, but as press-agents, Y. M. C. A. money-cadgers, army contractors, chautauqua orators, denouncers of Socialism, commanders of raids on German penucle clubs, destroyers of Wagner and Beethoven, and in other such knightly offices. In brief, they are the productions of cads and poltroons, and so they are full of ferocious balderdash. This is not true, however, of at least two books—"City Ways and Company Streets," by Charles Divine (*Moffat-Yard*), and "Hymn of Free Peoples Triumphant," by Herman Hagedorn (*Macmillan*). Divine, a former contributor to this great moral periodical, served as a private in the Twenty-seventh Infantry Division. What unit Hagedorn belonged to I don't know, but it evidently saw very exciting service, for his little book contains some rather gruesome pictures of battle. For example:

> And our bodies grew faint with slaying, our eyes grew dim.
> And our strong walls sprang in the air and fell and were dust;
> And nearer and nearer the hills' shot-shattered rim,
> The seething deep his terrible fingers thrust.
> And giddy and sick we faced the charging mass.

In the poems of the press-agents and spy-hunters soldiers always go into action exchanging minstrel jokes and singing "Marching Through Georgia"; it is only those bards who have actually faced bullets who confess to certain qualms. This confession, in Gilbert Frankau's "The Other Side" (*Knopf*),

is extremely frank and somewhat disconcerting. His title poem, indeed, provokes wonder that it has not been barred from the mails; surely there is nothing more disillusioning in "Men in War." Frankau is an Englishman, and his whole book shows it. Somehow the English get a certain dignity into their writing, even when they attempt dithyrambs. Our own poets are cruder, less self-conscious, more emotional. Turn to "Poems," by Geoffrey Dearmer (*McBride*), and "Fairies and Fusiliers," by Robert Graves (*Knopf*), and you will find further indications of the difference. Beside such highly-wrought and yet apparently off-hand stuff, the strophes of Hagedorn take on a sort of infantile extravagance and the rhymes of Divine descend to newspaper verse.

III

Of the new books by poets of established name, the most interesting, and by far, is a volume of posthumous pieces by Algernon Charles Swinburne (*Lane*). Swinburne's work-room, after he died, was found to contain a ton or two of notes, newspaper clippings, proof-sheets, odds and ends of manuscript, and other such garbage. He would allow such things to accumulate on his desk until writing became impossible, and then he would make a big packet, wrap it in newspaper and deposit it on one of the shelves that lined the room. His executors, exploring this gigantic literary kitchen-midden, found some treasures in it, including the manuscripts of a series of capital ballads in the ancient manner. They are printed in the present volume, along with some early pieces that the author probably wanted to suppress. The collection, unluckily, is not complete, for Edmund Gosse, in his introduction, says that certain poems have been withheld on the ground that they are improper. One more proof of the unwisdom of making such an old woman as Gosse editor of such a man as Swinburne! Gosse, among English critics, holds a place comparable to that of, say, Dr. William Lyon Phelps among American critics. That is to say, he is a learned, amiable and industrious man, but one unfortunately burdened with the theory that art has a moral purpose—that the better the Presbyterian, the nobler the artist. This theory is now official in America; it has been solemnly promulgated by the Creel Press Bureau over the Great Seal of the United States, and as a patriot I do not venture to dispute it. But I am yet free, I hope, to point out that a man who subscribes to it, not merely as a duty but by free conviction, is scarcely the man to do justice to so violent an anti-Puritan as Swinburne. If Swinburne stood for anything at all, he stood for a precisely contrary theory: he was the spokesman of absolute beauty, and, in particular, of beauty in rebellion against every restraint. To strain him, dead, through the Gossean sieve is as absurd as it would be to make Dr. Phelps editor of the unpublished pieces of Mark Twain or Eugene Field. But let us wait patiently for Gosse's much-to-be-lamented death; he is already seventy and can't last forever. Maybe the executor of the executor will be less prudish. Meanwhile, there are eleven first-rate ballads.

Denis A. McCarthy's "Songs of Sunrise" (*Little-Brown*) leave me cold; there is graceful verse in them, but I can find no poetry. Nor is there much in John Myers O'Hara's "Threnodies" (*Smith-Sale*). "At Easter" is a charming piece, and so is "Tenebra Crucis"—but what else? Mr. O'Hara naps in this volume. What could be more banal than the first stanza of his first poem, "The Street of Dreams"? Conrad Aiken's "The Charnel Rose" (*Four Seas*) I pass over; I have never been able to understand what Aiken is driving at in his poetry. Most of the other familiar poets offer nothing beyond competent journeyman-work. Dora Sigerson's "The Sad Years" (*Doran*) mirrors the political distractions which, according to the preface by Katharine Tynan, helped to break down the au-

thor's health and so bring on her recent death. Now and then, as in "The Comforters," there is a touch of the old florid beauty, but in the main these poems are labored and depressing. So are those in "Before Dawn," by Irene Rutherford McLeod (*Huebsch*). This Miss McLeod, I opine, is a much overestimated poetizer. There are at least two dozen women in America who write vastly better than she does.

IV

Among the débutantes of the year, one encounters a far greater display of talent. There is, indeed, something gratefully reassuring about the brilliance of such first books as Maxwell Bodenheim's "Minna and Myself" (*Pagan Co.*), Jean Starr Untermeyer's "Growing Pains" (*Huebsch*), Willard Wattles' "Lanterns in Gethsemane" (*Dutton*), Sherwood Anderson's "Mid-American Chants" (*Lane*), Alter Brody's "A Family Album" (*Huebsch*), and Lola Ridge's "The Ghetto" (*Huebsch*). If we produce half a dozen such volumes a year, then the art of poetry is flourishing lustily among us, despite the effort of Greenwich Village noodles to reduce it to an idiotic affectation. Of all these poets, Bodenheim gives me the largest pleasure. A lush and prodigious fancy is in him; he has extravagant but often extremely beautiful notions; there is not the slightest sign of triteness. Mrs. Untermeyer shows a manner almost diametrically opposite. Her dependence is upon the utmost simplicity, a naïveté almost primitiveness, and yet she, too, achieves excellent effects and displays a genuinely poetical imagination. Brody and Miss Ridge run to realism and are somewhat alike in manner, but though I don't like realism in poetry, I am here confronted by undoubted skill. Anderson and Wattles move in still other directions. The former experiments with sonorous dithyrambs in the Whitman fashion; the latter, save in a few poems, is highly artful and even formal. Both show honesty, fervor and dignity. Wattles, who is from Kansas, grounds his whole collection upon certain theological ideas, for example:

> That there is a conscious existence before and after this personal existence. . . .
> That Jesus has taken a human part more than once in the ordering of history. . . .
> That God is love. . . .

These Kansan superstitions excite my derision; it is almost impossible for me to imagine a white adult, not insane or awaiting execution, believing in them. And yet Wattles, from his metaphysical gutter, beholds enchanting visions in the empyrean, and some of those visions he gets into his verses. He has, in brief, a cunning hand for words, and now and then he makes a poem that has the soundest sort of merit. What a poet preaches, in truth, is a matter of no moment. Shakespeare seldom got beyond platitudes, and Swinburne was often content with mere nonsense. The important thing is the way he dresses it. Reduced to plain prose, Miss Reese's "Tears" makes me laugh; I believe in it no more than I believe in infant damnation or transubstantiation. But as it stands it seems to me to be one of the finest sonnets in English. So with such a thing as Wattles' "The Lady Magdalen." Just what it says I don't quite know—probably something that I don't suspect. But whatever it says, it says that something beautifully.

Other débutantes are Max Eastman, with "Colors of Life" (*Knopf*); James Joyce, with "Chamber Music" (*Huebsch*); Francis Carlin, with "My Ireland" (*Holt*); Frederick M. Clapp, with "New York and Other Verses" (*Jones*), Archie Austin Coates, with "City Tides" (*Doran*), and a posse of four poets, Thomas Kennedy, George Seymour, Vincent Starrett and Basil Thompson, with "Estrays" (*Camelot*). Joyce and Carlin are Irishmen, and both offer a number of little songs that are caressingly melodious. Carlin, the farther from Ireland, has Ireland the closer to heart; there is the nostalgia of the Gael on almost every page of his

book. Much has been made by gabbling journalists of the fact that he practises the retail furniture trade for a living. But why not? What has a man's means of revenue got to do with his dreams? Schumann was a lawyer; Miss Reese is a school teacher; James Branch Cabell is a genealogist; Louis Untermeyer is a manufacturer of jewelry; Eastman is an uplifter; Hans Sachs was a cobbler; I know an excellent musician who is a brewer. Which recalls the somewhat curious fact that Eastman's faith in utopias is scarcely heard of in his verse. Instead, he presents a number of delicate and ingratiating lyrics—*e.g.*, "Rainy Song"—, some longer pieces that are rather less appealing, and a shrewd and learned preface on American poetry. Clapp and Coates interest me less. They are competent, but, after all, what they attempt has been attempted before. The four poets who make their bow together were too polite to one another when they concocted their book. It has some shining spots, but in the main it is commonplace.

V

It is a rare event for a book of verse to come out of the South: the *beaux arts*, down there, seem to have yielded to the prevailing hookworm, pellagra, boll weevil and other such parasites. But here come two at once, though both are printed in Boston. They are "From the Heart of a Folk," by Waverley Turner Carmichael (*Cornhill*), and "Songs of a Red Cross Nurse," by Brookes More (*Cornhill*). Dr. More's volume is filled with the alarms of battle, and he runs to a realism that is often startling, as witness:

> And at the word a bursting shell,
> Filled with a hellish mixture,
> Tore from its roots the poor lad's arm
> That held his sweetheart's picture.
>
> Another dreadful fragment struck
> The old man in the forehead—
> And, just to use plain English now,
> The mess was something horrid.

The specimen well reveals the author's debonair and unflinching manner, but is perhaps unfair to his versification. Such rhymes as *mixture-picture* and *forehead-horrid* are not, after all, frequent in his stanzas. How he arrives at the first I can't make out. The correct pronunciation of *picture*, in the South, makes it identical with *pitcher*, as in "I had my *pitcher* tooken"; *pixture* is a New England barbarism. . . . But the point need not detain us; the important thing is that Southern genius, casting off its lethargy, has at last made its gallant contribution to the literature of the war.

Dr. Carmichael, who is of African descent, is a somewhat quieter singer than his Anglo-Saxon confrere. His book of songs deals with the life of his own people, often humorously. It is introduced by a Harvard professor, who says that the author had never left his native Alabama until last summer. In a poet so recently emerged from a state in which the art of letters is not practised one looks for a degree of naïveté verging upon crudeness, and that is precisely what one finds in the present pieces. The ideas in them are ideas that bards more favorably situated have thought of before; the technic of their expression is often uncouth. But now and then this very uncouthness has a charm of its own. Here, indeed, are rhymes by a Southern negro who is always all negro, and in some of them one finds traces of that strange, barbaric eloquence which must forever distinguish the Jubilee Songs. Their faults, in the main, are the faults of what might be called undigested sophistication. For example, consider this:

> Near de margin of de stream
> 'Neath a towerin' hill,
> In the field's shadow and gleam,
> Stands de dear ole mill.

Here is the verse of a Southern poet already beginning to be poisoned by Harvard. The dialect is quite imbecile. Would an actual negro of the total immersion belt use such words as *margin* and *towering?* Plainly, no. Would he pronounce *shadow* like Dr. Charles W. Eliot, or would he make it *shadder?*

Finally, having debased *the* to *de* in one line, would he restore the impossible *th* in another? These slips the introductory professor should have remedied. They are blemishes upon a book that is otherwise of considerable interest. . . . I attempt no comparison between the two trans-Potomac poets. If I gave the palm to More, I'd be accused, as a Southerner myself, of race prejudice. And if I gave it to Carmichael, the outraged Caucasians of Alabama would probably burn down his house.

VI

Imagism, the only intelligible art theory in the whole free verse movement and for long the subject of much labored exposition and debate, now confesses its origin by appearing frankly as an idea borrowed from the orient. One of the most notable of the imagists, John Gould Fletcher, expounds it as a Japanese invention in his "Japanese Prints" (*Four Seas*). This, of course, is not quite accurate, and in a parenthesis Mr. Fletcher admits it. The Japanese have contributed absolutely nothing to the arts; they are, and always have been, mere imitators of the Chinese; their chief service has been to convert the delicate and highly characteristic arts of the Chinese into crafts or trades and so reduce them to the uses of a sordid and vulgar people. Compare, for example, the furniture of China to that of Japan. The former is downright magnificent—I have seen specimens of it so lovely and so noble that it affected me like great music; the latter is mere gimcrackery—it fits into an American "cosy-corner" almost perfectly. So with the literature of the two countries. That of China is actually as varied and as copious as that of the Greeks, as you will discover if you read Herbert A. Giles' "History of Chinese Literature" (*Appleton*)—one of the most charming books, by the way, ever written by a professor. But in that of Japan you will find very little—it is mainly cheap and imitative. Even the Japanese *hokku*, which Mr. Fletcher explains and praises at length, is no more than a copy from a Chinese model. The Japanese have simply formalized it, and hence debased it. It may, in the hands of a sound poet, yield beauty, but it invites the mere trickster and tends to become hollow.

The idea at the bottom of Chinese poetry, and thus at the bottom of imagism, is an idea of reticence and restraint, of suggestion and indirection. The poet does not petrify his conceit by putting it into literal and forthright words; he tries to make it emerge almost imperceptibly from the picture he draws—to leave it, so to speak, floating in the air. He thus gets into his poem something of the ethereal quality of music; it is lifted one more step above mere prose. Moreover, he thus assumes a higher capacity in his reader. That reader must be a poet, too; he must be keenly sensitive to what is not obvious; he must perceive the complete image in the fragment, the shadow. Let us take a commonplace example. A bad poet conceives the notion that his mistress resembles a rose, and proceeds to embalm the concept in a poem. First he describes the rose—its lovely color, its grace, its perfume, its shy charm. Then he patiently and laboriously establishes its likeness to his Louise, item by item, character by character, detail by detail. Then he heaves a sigh and has done. This may be poetry; it may even be pretty poetry—but it is forgotten as soon as it is read; there is no challenge to the fancy at the end; it is a mere statement of a dubious fact. What Chinese poetry does, and what imagism does, is to stop short with the first picture. The rose is displayed, and there is a hint that there is One who is rose-like—and that is all. Everything else is merely suggested. There is no relentless torturing of the thought; there is no neat play of simile and antithesis; there is none of the machinery of bad verse. It is poetry that is extraordinarily delicate, and hence easy to spoil. Infinitely more than any sort of realism, whether "free" or not "free," it lays heavy tech-

nical and artistic burdens upon the poet.

Mr. Fletcher, in a few of his *hokku*, has succeeded admirably. In such things as "Memory and Forgetting," "Wind and Chrysanthemum" and "City Lights" there is genuine beauty. On other occasions he is a good deal less successful; his efforts to be Japanese get a clumsy artificiality into his lines. Judith Gautier, in her "Chinese Lyrics," translated from the French by James Whitall (*Huebsch*), makes the same half-way score. They are based upon actual Chinese poems, and often the double translation leaves them rather tattered, but in more than one there remains a charm that refuses to be destroyed.

VII

In the following volumes I find nothing save a respectable mediocrity; "Poems of New England and Old Spain," by Frederick E. Pierce (*Four Seas*); "Songs and Sea Voices," by James S. Doubleday (*Arens*); "Rediscoveries," by R. D. Ware (*Cornhill*); "As Thou Wilt," by Ethelwyn Dithridge (*Stratford*); "Echoes and Realities," by Walter Prichard Eaton (*Doran*); "Rain in May," by Forntassin Gift (*Four Seas*); and "The Fairy Islands," by Valley Flower (*Cornhill*). In "The Laughing Willow," by Oliver Herford (*Doran*), there is old-fashioned jocosity by a humorist of the early 90's; he still parodies the "Rubaiyat." In "Jevon's Block," by Kate Buss (*Four Seas*), there is a dull imitation of "The Spoon River Anthology." In "War Mothers," by Edward F. Garesché, S. J. (*Benziger*), and in "The World and the Waters," by the same author (*Queen's Work Press*), there is an occasional line of some beauty, but in the main only time-worn and obvious stuff. In "Bugle Rhymes From France," by Paul Myron (*Mid-Nation*), there is balderdash. In "Verse, 1914-1918," by Gregory Scott Robbins (*Privately printed*) there is the doggerel of a school-boy. In "The Rejected Voice," by Nelson Gardner (*Privately printed*), there is rubbish. In "Songs of America," by Simon N. Patten (*Huebsch*), there is this:

Gone are the days when we sang the hours away,
Gone are the mates with whom we used to play.
Why are they gone, leaving all the world so glum?
No answer can be given, but the blight of rum!

And in "Verse and Worse," by Norah Lee Haymond (*Privately printed*), there is this:

There may be those who envy me
My jewels and earthly joy—
But I'd give them all for the love of a man
And the right to a baby boy.

VIII

"The Stag's Hornbook," edited by John McClure (*Knopf*), comes too late to be of anything save antique and melancholy interest to stags. Its noble drinking-songs, laboriously collected from the literature of five hundred years, collide with prohibition; in a year or two it will be unlawful to sing them, and perhaps the horn-book itself will be burnt by the common hangman. But let us cherish it while it lasts—it is a comprehensive, devoted and excellent work. . . . Three other anthologies. In "The Melody of Earth," by Mrs. Waldo Richards (*Houghton-Mifflin*), there is a collection of nature and garden poems not to my taste, but perhaps to yours. In "The Path on the Rainbow," by George W. Cronyn (*Boni-Liveright*), there is an almost exhaustive collection of American Indian poetry, with a valuable introduction by Mary Austin. The likeness of these poems to the poetry of the Chinese is often quite startling. Finally, in "The Greenwich Village Anthology" (*Morse*) there is fresh proof of what every editor knows—that the talents of the village are very slender, and that much passes for artistic passion down there that is simply the *joie de vivre* of naughty high-school boys. . . . So much for poetry.



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